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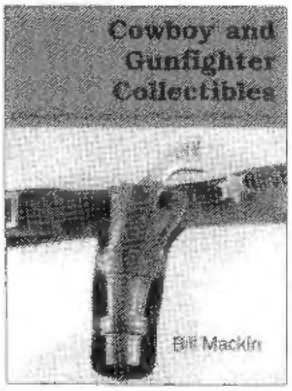

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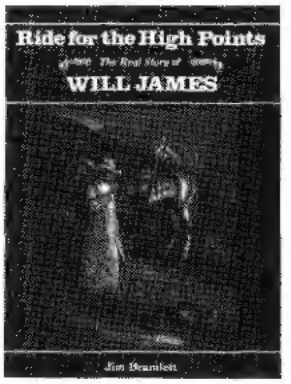

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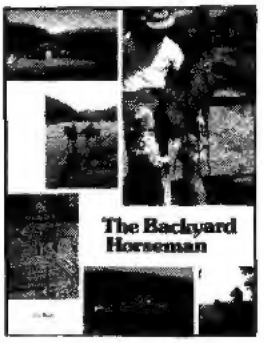

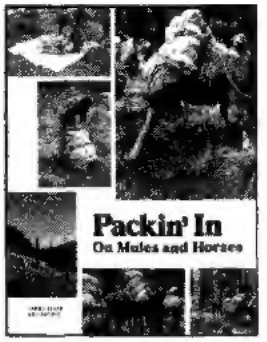

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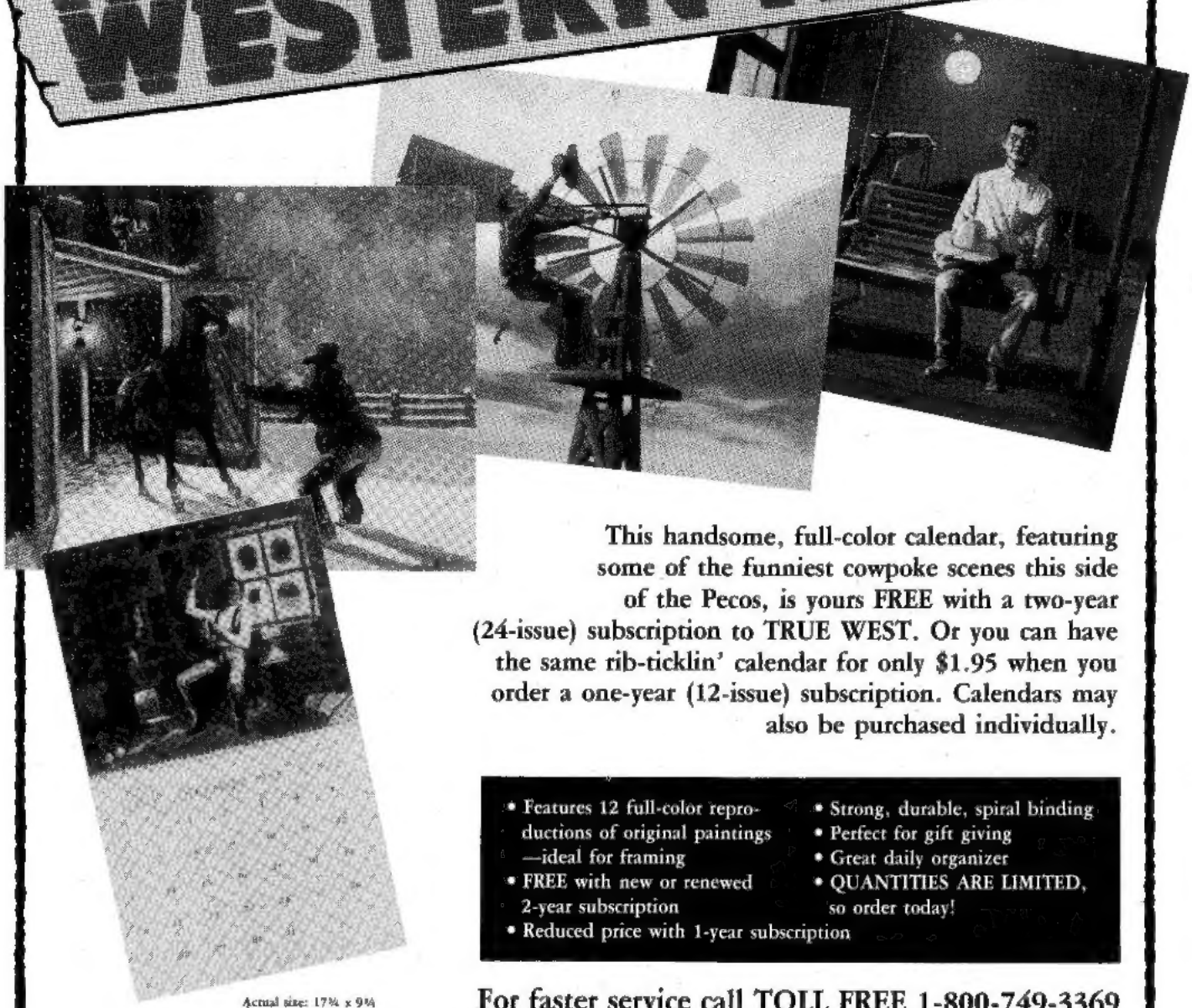

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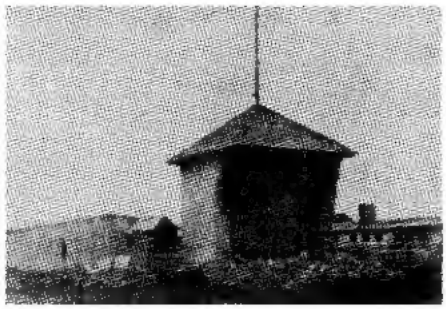

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From the Editor

Howdy, folks!

In my continuing contemplation of the on-going war between the New Western Historians and the Old Western Historians, I've been wondering lately whatever happened to Grandma and Grandpa. I recently heard a fine western writer, a traditionalist descended from sturdy ranching stock, proclaim, "My grandparents were honest, hard-working people, and I'm proud of them. And thank God we don't have to write about suburban angst!"

The Old Historians in the room that day applauded, and a few shouted their approval. They seemed to be getting the better of the argument and were enjoying it.

I could sympathize with the woman who made that statement. My ancestors, too—leastwise the ones I'll own up to—were honest, hard-working folks. By the time most of them arrived in the United States from Germany and Cornwall, the Indian Wars had been fought and the losers were already relegated to reservations. So I can even rationalize my way around their sharing any of the collective responsibility for that debacle.

As for suburban angst ("anxiety" for those of you who don't keep up with late twentieth-century psycho-babble), I doubt that much difference exists between worrying about losing your section of land with improvements and worrying about losing your quarter-acre lot and ranch-style house.

Another fine western writer in the room that day stood up and added, "Everybody wants to blame Grandma and Grandpa for settling the West, but I don't see any of them pulling up stakes and moving back to Europe!" More applause, more shouts of approval.

True enough. I doubt the Europeans would take us back without a fight, and there's too blamed many of 'em for us to just march in and take over like we did here. And even if we had that choice, most of us would rather stay right here in the American West.

What had those two writers so riled that day has sometimes been referred to as "ancestor bashing." Its most obvious form amounts to damning our ancestors as bad guys who got together in some great, unspoken evil conspiracy to do everything wrong. It can also take the subtler form of thinking of our predecessors as quaint buffoons, slightly less intelligent than we are in the present, who ignorantly muddled along, unintentionally making a mess of things. Either way, ancestor bashing ignores the accomplishments of a past that managed to give rise to whatever might be good about the present.

On the other hand, though, if we refuse to look at history with a critical eye, it's easy to go to the other extreme and indulge in a bit of unproductive nostalgia. That kind of uncritical acceptance of our past, as has been pointed out by far better thinkers than me, condemns us to go on compounding history's mistakes.

Seems to me that it all boils down to this: love 'em or hate 'em, we're still tied up emotionally enough with our forbears to take it personally when someone else offers an opinion of them. If you imply to a ranchwoman that her precursors were greedy misfits whose cattle grazing, trailing, feeding, and watering damaged the environment, you're accusing her of the same offenses. If you remind a man that the land he inherited from his parents and grandparents before him was taken by force from its previous occupants, then you're accusing him of receiving stolen property. Nobody these days seems willing or able to take a more detached perspective and realize that the point of history is not to decide whether Grandma and Grandpa are going to heaven or hell. I reckon that decision has already been taken care of without our advice. The point of history is—or at least should be—to try to understand why Grandma and Grandpa responded as they did to their own time and place and to use that knowledge as a guide for our own actions in our own time and place.

When all is said and done, the argument between the revisionists and the traditional historians is not so much about the past as it is about our present and our children's and grandchildren's future. That's why it has attracted so much attention and why it arouses such strong emotions. And that's why I reckon we'd all do well to let Grandma and Grandpa rest in peace, to stop considering history their trial and start considering it our tool to deal with some of the very real problems we face in the West today.

John Joerschke

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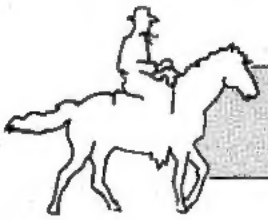

Truly Western

Twelve Issues a Year and the Best Friends in the World

I've been a subscriber to TRUE WEST since 1958, and to OLD WEST since issue number two. (I bought OLD WEST number one on the newsstand.) A few years back, you published a letter of mine about Canada's own Yodeling Cowboy, Wilf "Montana Slim" Carter. Soon after, we received letters from Floyd and Georgia Posing of Meridian, Idaho, and from Wilmer and Mary Cook in Enterprise, Oregon. They were all old Wilf Carter fans and couldn't get his tapes in the US.

We were lucky enough to be able to get a few tapes for them, and over the years we have all become fast friends. We've exchanged heaven knows how many letters and phone conversations. In September 1990, Wilmer and Mary and their grandson, David Cook, drove more than one thousand miles to spend a few days with us. Those great people, all TRUE WEST fans, are like part of our family, and we owe it all to you and TRUE WEST. TRUE WEST readers are the best people in the world!

Floyd is a retired cowboy who now works at the university in Boise. Wilmer is a retired rural mail man, from back when the mail actually did get through. He and Mary now run a small farm outside Enterprise.

Our story isn't quite as dramatic as the couple who met and married because of a letter in TRUE WEST, but our lives are much richer today because of the friendships that grew from my one little letter.—**Don Caswell, Rural Route 1, Deloraine, Manitoba, Canada R0M 0M0.**

Editor's Note: Thanks, pard, for being a member of our family. It warms the cockles of my heart to know we've done something to promote friendship and improve international relations.

Revisionist Versus Traditional History

As a long-time subscriber to TRUE WEST, I would like to make a few comments on your editorial on revisionist and traditional historians (TRUE WEST, October 1991). Having been a serious student of western history for many years, I am of the opinion that there is no comparison between the two groups.

True revisionists are aiming for one of two things, either financial gain or the disparagement of all traditional values. They are not dedicated to finding facts or truth. I am especially wary of certain female writers who want to substitute "herstory" for "history." It won't wash.

The late Louis L'Amour, whom I regard as one of the best modern

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western historians, as well as a top-notch novelist, said the reading public is much more aware than some imagine, and among them are experts in almost any field.

Modern-day writers are skilled in writing techniques and, for the most part, are excellent researchers. But many are hacks who lack the spirit or moral integrity to write the truth.

Given the material that is available and the present situation in publishing, I do commend TRUE WEST: Bill O'Neal, Chuck Parsons, R.K. DeArment, Mary G. Stano, Judy Alter, and others who write for you are real pros.

TRUE WEST certainly has had a glorious past, and I believe it has a good future. Keep them coming!—**W.C. French, Route 2, Box 3588 R, Gravois Mills, Missouri 65037.**

Editor's Note: Thanks, W.C., for sharing your thoughts. I cain't vouch for the next person's motives, but if anybody is writing history of any sort simply to make money telling lies they're bound to be disappointed. They'd be better off writing speeches for politicians.

Colonel Tim McCoy

A word of thanks for a wonderful publication, TRUE WEST. I have been a long-time subscriber and have enjoyed reading every copy.

The article "Rocky Mountain Riders: Wyoming's Volunteer Cavalry," by Jean A. Mathisen (TRUE WEST, November 1991), includes a photo on page thirty-two of Colonel Torrey and his staff at Fort D.A. Russell. Is it possible that the gentleman third from the right is cowboy movie star Colonel Tim McCoy? I know McCoy was active in the Wyoming state militia.—**Capt. Harry James O'Hara, 60817 Apache Lane, Washington, Michigan 48094.**

Editor's Note: You're right on the mark about Colonel McCoy's involvement in the Wyoming state militia. But he was born in 1891 and would have been about seven years old at the time the photograph was taken—mighty precocious by anyone's standards!

Your letters and comments are welcome. Please keep letters to 300 words or less. All letters received by Western Publications will be considered for publication unless otherwise stipulated in the letter. Space does not permit us to print all letters we receive. Be sure to include full name, address, and zip code. Photos welcome. Address all letters to Western Publications, P.O. Box 2107, Stillwater, OK 74076.

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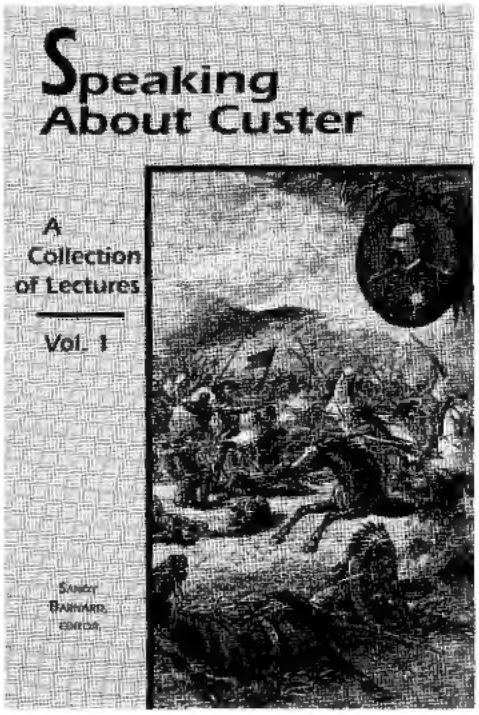

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Exploring Lewis and Clark

By HELEN WIEMAN BLEDSOE

A lot of history took place near the mouth of the Columbia River and visitors can see many of the places where it happened in an action-filled weekend in Lewis and Clark country. Starting at Astoria, Oregon, and crossing the Interstate Bridge to Washington, it is just fifteen miles to Cape Disappointment, named by John Meares, a British fur trader who sighted the cape in 1788 while searching for the Columbia River. He wrote in his journal, "Disappointment continued to accompany us. . . we can now with safety assert that no such river. . . exists." What a surprise to the modern visitor who just crossed it!

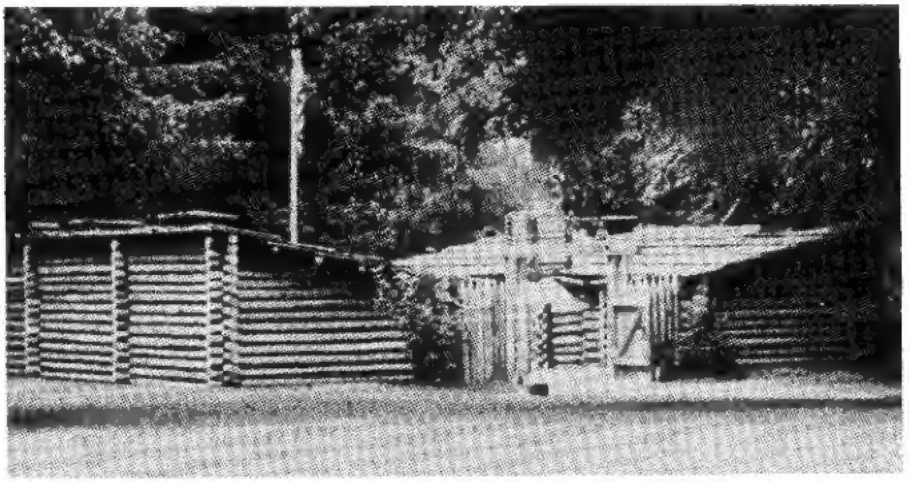
The Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center in Fort Canby State Park offers a chance to share the excitement of the men who discovered the area. It was near here that Sergeant John Ordway first sighted "the Passiffic ocean" in 1805. It was also here, high on a cliff overlooking the ocean, that eight guns were installed in 1865 as "the first fortification thrown up in Oregon Territory against foreign foes and domestic traitors."

One of the first displays in the museum is a replica of the secret message which President Thomas Jefferson sent Congress in 1803, proposing Lewis and Clark's trip. All the exhibits are keyed to quotations from the explorers' diaries. How happy they were when they heard the "roreing" of waves "brakeing on the rockey Shores!"

The hardships and adventures of the men come alive through displays of their clothes, trading supplies, boats, and paddles. A short, woodsy trail meanders from the museum to the oldest operating lighthouse in the Pacific Northwest. (Its original lens is on display in the museum.) Despite the flashing red and white warnings from

Top and bottom: National Park Service, Fort Clatsop

Author's Photo



Clockwise from left: An old boat lies stranded on a beach near Oysterville; re-enactors canoe down the Lewis and Clark River; the winter quarters of Fort Clatsop barracks.

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Country

this Cape Disappointment lighthouse, so many ships were wrecked against the rocks that another lighthouse, North Head, was built just two miles away. Both stand guard at lonely, romantic spots.

Farther north on the narrow, twenty-eight-mile Long Beach Peninsula is the intriguing village of Oysterville. R.H. Espy and I.A. Clarke listened to the advice of Siwash chief Nahcoti and settled there in 1854 to harvest the vast tidebeds of Willapa Bay oysters. Soon 500 settlers were digging oysters and shipping them by schooner to San Francisco. Oysters were in great demand during the Gold Rush, and their high price made rich men of the oysterbed owners. With lumber brought from California on the schooners' return trips they built the houses in Oysterville, where some of their descendants still live. Typical is the John Crellin house, with its gingerbread trim, sitting snugly behind a white picket fence and beds of pink roses.

The old headstones in the Oysterville Cemetery make interesting reading. Just to the right of the entrance is Chief Nahcoti's grave; nearby tombstones bear dates ranging up to the present.

The next historic site, beyond tall heaps of oyster shells and swampy cranberry bogs, is Fort Columbia State Park near the little town of Chinook. In 1903, just a century after Lewis and Clark arrived, the fort was built to defend the coast and the entrance of the Columbia River. However, neither then nor during World Wars I and II was it ever necessary to fire a gun in anger.

Visitors can wander through four deserted gun batteries and bunkers, and investigate a long wooden building which used to house the Coastal Artillery Corpsmen. The mess is set with period china and silver, and the kitchen boasts an oak refrigerator and three coal-fired ranges. Upstairs the enlisted

(continued on page 10)

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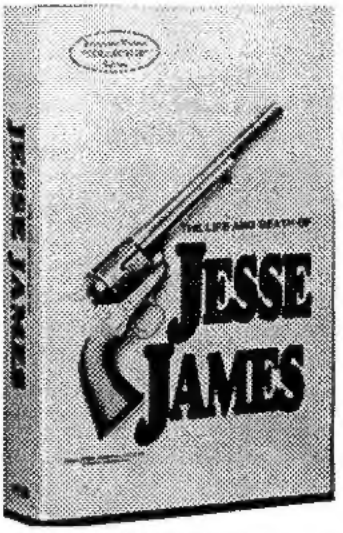

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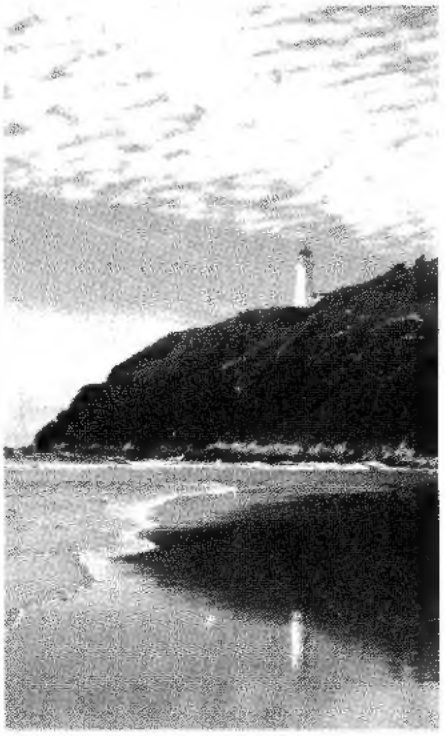
(continued from page 9)

men's barracks is sparsely furnished with rows of narrow cots, wall lockers, and a table or two. A barber's chair is prominently displayed.

Back across the bridge in Oregon is the Astoria Maritime Museum, where river sternwheelers and seagoing fishing vessels make history come alive. Relics of some of the 220 local shipwrecks testify silently to the fact that this is indeed one of the most dangerous ship passages in the world.



Washington State Parks
The North Head lighthouse near Cape Disappointment.

The lightship *Columbia* is docked alongside the museum. The ship is named for the vessel in which Captain Robert Gray, of Boston, made history by being the first to sail up the Columbia River, which he also named. For eighty-eight years, until 1979, a lightship was moored six miles offshore, outside the bar of the river, to alert sailors to these deadly waters.

The first in the series of lightships was a wooden sailing vessel. Gale winds often blew it off station, as indeed sometimes happened with the later, heavier ships. The present museum ship, the second in service, was built on the East Coast in 1908 and sailed around Cape Horn to the Columbia River. The last working lightship was decommissioned in 1979; it was replaced by an electronically equipped buoy, forty feet wide and forty-two feet high.

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The last stop on the history trail is Fort Clatsop, five miles south of Astoria. The Lewis and Clark group left blustery Cape Disappointment after a few days and established their winter camp where the weather was less stormy and elk were plentiful. Certainly the climate was discouraging—it rained all but twelve of the 106 days they camped there. The men's spirits sagged.

Fort Clatsop has been reconstructed and visitors can roam through the surrounding spruce and hemlock forest, see the canoe landing, and wonder at the tight quarters in the log barracks. In the summertime, rangers in buckskin clothes present a living history program, demonstrating canoe building, candle making, buckskin sewing, and rifle use.

All these historic sites can be seen in a leisurely weekend, driving less than one hundred miles.

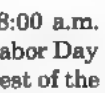
The Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center is open daily May 1 to September 30, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The rest of the year it is open Saturday and Sunday only, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., or by special arrangement. Admission is free.

The town of Oysterville is open to visitors any time.

Fort Columbia State Park is open daily April 1 to September 30 from 6:30 a.m. to dusk. From October 1 to March 31 it is open 8:00 a.m. to dusk, Wednesday through Saturday. Museum hours from June 1 to about September 20 are 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily. Admission to both the park and museum is free.

The Astoria Maritime Museum is open from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily from May through September, and daily except Monday from October through April. Admission for adults is $2.50; for seniors and children ages six to eighteen $1.50. Admission is free for children under six.

Fort Clatsop is open daily 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., from June 12 to Labor Day and 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. the rest of the year. Admission is $1.00 per person ages seventeen to sixty-one, with a maximum per family of three dollars. Children and seniors get in free.



Western Roundup is a report on places to go and things to see associated with the history of the Old West. Submissions are welcome. Information on scheduled events should be submitted at least four months prior to the event. Items on historic places are also welcome. Send information including photos to: Western Roundup, Western Publications, P.O. Box 2107, Stillwater, OK 74076.

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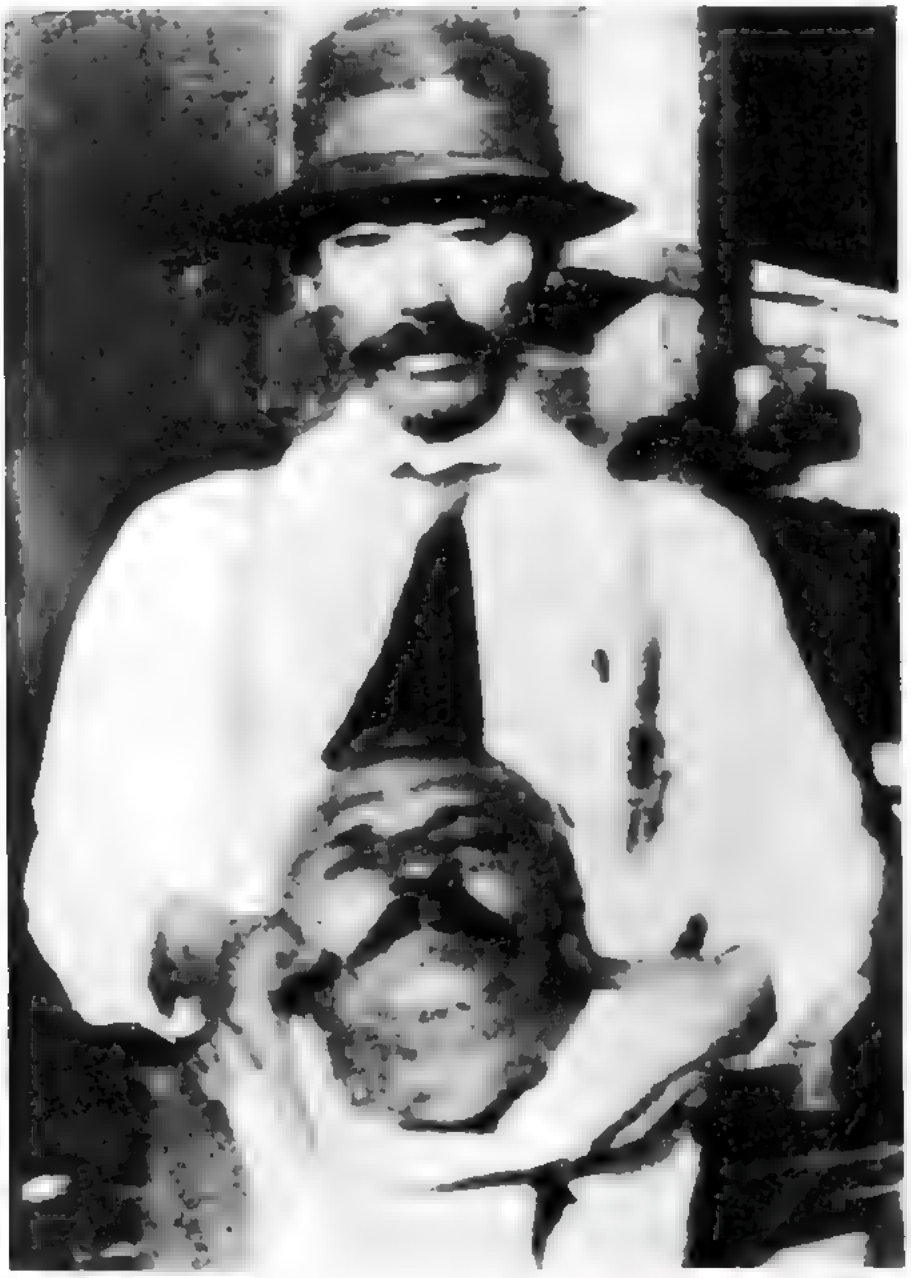
New Mexico Desperado

By CHUCK PARSONS

Dave Rudabaugh was, according to most accounts, the only man whom Billy the Kid really feared. Sam Farley, 5501 Haley Street, Vermillion, Ohio 44087, wants to know more about this New Mexico badman.

Rudabaugh was born July 14, 1854, in Illinois. He was in the Fort Smith, Arkansas, vicinity about 1871 and soon afterward was frequenting the Kansas cowtowns. Within a few years he was associated with Doc Holliday in the Fort Griffin, Texas, area.

On January 27, 1878, Rudabaugh and several others attempted to hold up a train at Kinsley, Kansas. They failed miserably, and Rudabaugh and three others were captured. Rudabaugh, however, turned state's evidence and went free.



Nita Stewart Haley Memorial Library

Dave Rudabaugh was killed and then decapitated at Parral, Chihuahua, Mexico.

Rudabaugh then showed up in the Las Vegas, New Mexico, area and drove a stagecoach. He may have been involved in a stage robbery on August 30, 1879, and he was suspected of involvement in a Santa Fe train robbery on November 14, 1879. Nevertheless, Rudabaugh was made a policeman of the New Town section of Las Vegas.

Not surprisingly, Rudabaugh mixed his police duties with criminal activity. He attempted to break convicted murderer John Joshua Webb out of jail on April 30, 1880, killing deputy sheriff Antonio Lino Valdez in the process. Rudabaugh's efforts were for naught; Webb chose to remain in jail.

Rudabaugh left the Las Vegas area and showed up in the Fort Sumner, New Mexico, region where he joined Billy the Kid and his gang. Their horse-thieving efforts drew heat from Sheriff Pat Garrett and his posse. Rudabaugh was present when the posse killed gang members Tom O'Folliard, on December 19, 1880, and Charlie Bowdre on December 23. The posse rounded up the rest of the gang, including Rudabaugh, and took them to Las Vegas.

Hoping to avoid charges in the Valdez murder, Rudabaugh confessed to a federal charge of robbing the US mail. He received a life sentence but did not escape the Valdez murder charge, on which he was convicted and sentenced to hang.

On December 3, 1881, Rudabaugh and six others broke out of jail. Rudabaugh made it to Mexico and managed a ranch for a time. Trouble eventually caught up with him again, though. On February 18, 1886, he got involved in a cantina fight at Parral, Chihuahua, killing two Mexicans and wounding another before he himself was killed. Townspeople beheaded Rudabaugh's body, put the head on a pike, and paraded it through the streets.

Chief Seattle

The Indians of the Plains and Southwest frequently get most of the attention in Old West history, but Doris M. Reed, 5500 N. Galvin Road, Sibley, Missouri 64088, wants to know something about an Indian from the Northwest, Chief Seattle.

Seattle was chief of the Duwamish

and Suquamish tribes of the Puget Sound region. He was born about 1790 near where the city named for him, Seattle, Washington, is located. Seattle's father was Suquamish, and his mother was Duwamish.

Seattle's name first appears on an 1855 treaty negotiated by Isaac Stevens, Washington territorial governor and superintendent of Indian affairs. As far as is known, Seattle was always friendly to the whites, welcoming them from their first arrival in the Northwest and earning the friendship of many. Jesuit missionaries converted him to Catholicism.

Seattle died on June 7, 1866, and is buried in the Suquamish Indian cemetery near Seattle. Local residents put a monument over his grave in 1890.

Calamity Jane Source Material

Calamity Jane is an ever-popular Old West character, and Peggy Kurkowski, 36169 Lyndon, Livonia, Michigan 48185, asks what the best source is to learn about "the real person . . . behind the myth."

For the best study of Calamity Jane, one can do no better than the book *Calamity Jane: A Study in Historical Criticism* by Roberta Reed Sollis, published by the Historical Society of Montana in 1958.

Tom Horn Postscript

Nearly ninety years after Wyoming gunman Tom Horn was executed in 1903, his trial remains one of the most controversial aspects of western history. Earl Glenn Madden, 107 Elm Street, Crossett, Arkansas 71635, recalls that shortly before Horn died, prosecutor Walter Stoll announced he would press perjury charges against Horn's lady friend, Glendolene M. Kimmell. Mr. Madden wants to know if Kimmell ever went to trial.

Miss Kimmell, a schoolteacher in the Iron Mountain district, did not have to stand trial. Although she claimed to have overheard others plotting to kill Willie Nickell, the boy for whose death Horn was executed, Kimmell left the state and returned to her small hometown in Missouri.

If you have a question, send it to Chuck Parsons, Western Publications, P.O. Box 2107, Stillwater, OK 74076. Please keep questions brief. Sign your full name and address, including zip code. Names and addresses will be published if question is used. Space limitations may not permit us to use all questions.

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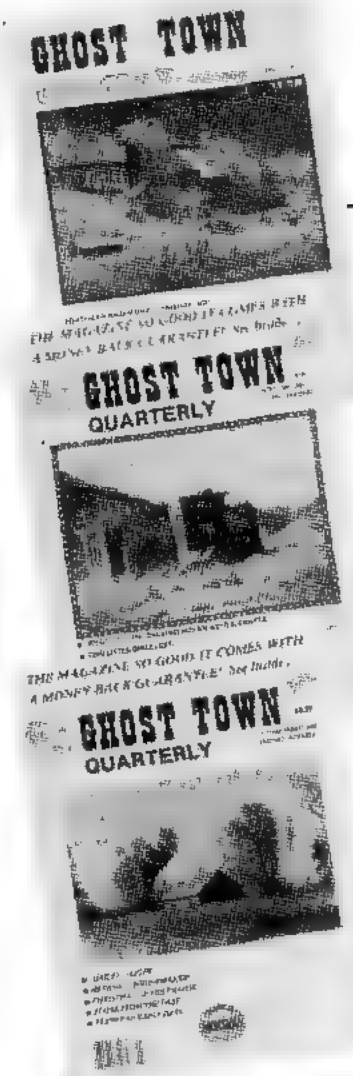

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COWBOY-BOOTED GU
The Private Detective

By RICHARD F. SELCER

In the days before Sam Spade and Philip Marlowe, Thomas Magnum and Jim Rockford, even before Sherlock Holmes, there were Timothy Isaiah Courtright, Heck Thomas, and Jack Duncan. These hard-bitten men were not the familiar Hollywood-style gumshoe of today, with sport jacket, tie, and shoulder holster. They dressed in trail clothes and wore a six-shooter strapped to one leg—or sometimes both legs—and carried no license for what they did. But they were some of the first private detectives in the West, and they set professional standards and occasionally earned shady reputations that those who followed had to either live up to or live down.

The private detective has gotten lost somewhere in western history. He is not as romantic a figure as the cold-blooded outlaw, nor is he the lonely defender of law and order made famous in western mythology. He operated somewhere in the gray area between. His origins are vague; his accomplishments overlooked; and his name, if known at all, is probably included with either the outlaws or the lawmen. Some of the men who spent at least part of their careers as detectives were Joe LeFors, Tom Horn, James B. Hume, June Peak, and Charles Siringo, all of whom worked for legendary, outlaw-chasing organizations at one time or another. Countless lesser-known men all over the West also made their livings as private detectives but free-lanced their services to local employers.

The standard for all private detectives in the late nineteenth century was the Pinkerton Detective Agency, originally founded by Allan Pinkerton in the 1850s. The Pinkertons virtually invented the business and in the next thirty years built a national reputation protecting presidents, breaking strikes, and chasing down outlaws like Jesse

Author's Photo

"Fort Worth's finest" pose on the steps of the county courthouse around the turn of the century. Most of them considered private detectives little more than bounty hunters who kept legitimate lawmen from collecting rewards.

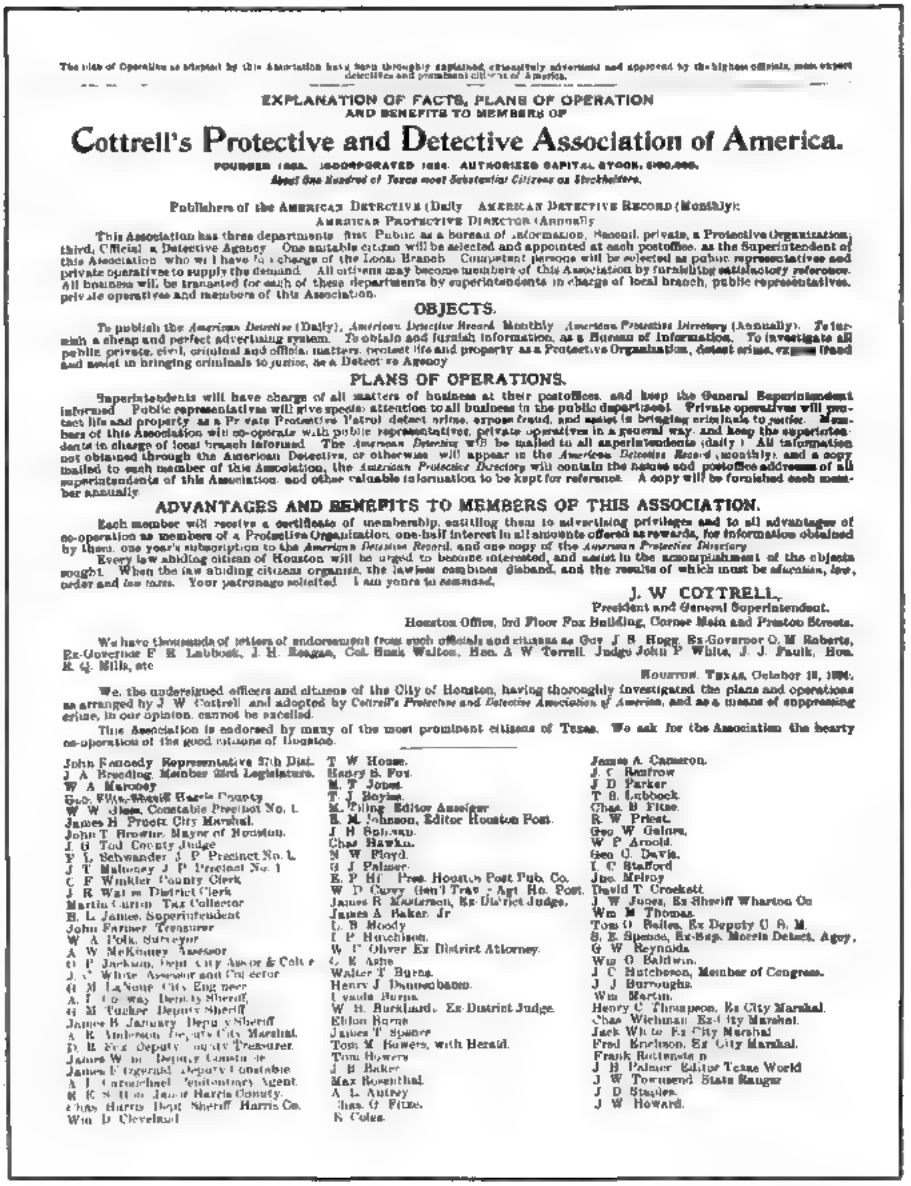
MSHOES in Texas

James, the Wild Bunch, and Sam Bass. They also turned crime-fighting into big business. Their methods, their organization, and even their famous logo—the "eye that never sleeps"—were widely copied by a host of imitators.

The western variety of private detectives were often little more than bounty hunters or hired guns who earned money bringing in desperadoes who were too big or too slippery for regular lawmen to catch. Gunplay, not criminal investigation, was their specialty. They filled an important gap between law enforcement and vigilante justice, although they tended more toward the latter than the former.

A BAD MAN was not really worth pursuing unless he had a price on his head. The bigger the price, the more dogged the pursuit, and the less reason to chance bringing him in alive. Informal rules of bounty hunting were that a wanted man, "dead or alive," was delivered to the nearest sheriff—"inside the jail door" was the expression. The bounty hunter, or "private detective" as they preferred to be called, then demanded a receipt from the law officer, and turned that receipt in to his employer for payment. If the reward were offered by the state, the detective had to wait until the man was tried and convicted to collect his reward. The other work of private detectives, such as catching burglars, delivering prisoners, and recovering swindled money was unglamorous and paid only enough to keep the wolves away from the door between the big manhunts. Those jobs were pretty much the same all over the West, regardless of whether the detective's home was San Francisco, Denver, or Fort Worth.

It is the Texas detectives who draw our attention here. The first private detective agency in Texas was founded in Fort Worth in 1878, and the date was significant. The north Texas area had been experiencing a rash of stage and train robberies for some time. Most of them were blamed on Sam Bass and his gang, who started robbing local stage coaches in December 1877, then graduated to trains in the spring of 1878. Four stage robberies around Fort Worth and an equal number of train robberies around Dallas in the space of four months had local law officers chasing their tails. Bass was eventually run to ground in the summer of 1878, but not before leading lawmen on a merry chase. As one contemporary put it, "More men were employed in this campaign, more powder burned, more bullets buried in post oaks and green hillsides, more horses rode to death, more ground galloped over, more false alarms given, more prophecies blown into thin air, more expectations blasted and fewer men captured than ever before occurred in any similar campaign in human history." When John Wesley Carhart, an itinerant Methodist Episcopal preacher, described his first visit to the Lone Star



The plan of Operation as adopted by this Association has been thoroughly explained, cheerfully advertised and approved by the highest officials, most expert detectives and prominent citizens of America.

EXPLANATION OF FACTS, PLANS OF OPERATION AND BENEFITS TO MEMBERS OF

Cottrell's Protective and Detective Association of America.

FOUNDED 1883. INCORPORATED 1886. AUTHORIZED CAPITAL STOCK, $100,000.

About One Hundred of Texas most Substantial Citizens are Stockholders.

Publishers of the AMERICAN DETECTIVE (Daily AMERICAN DETECTIVE RECORD (Monthly)
AMERICAN PROTECTIVE DIRECTOR (Annually

This Association has three departments: first Public as a bureau of information, Second, private, a Protective Organization, third, Official, a Detective Agency. One suitable citizen will be selected and appointed at each postoffice, as the Superintendent of this Association who will have full charge of the Local Branch. Competent persons will be selected as public representatives and private operatives to supply the demand. All citizens may become members of this Association by furnishing satisfactory references. All business will be transacted for each of these departments by superintendents in charge of local branch, public representatives, private operatives and members of this Association.

OBJECTS.

To publish the *American Detective* (Daily), *American Detective Record*, Monthly *American Protective Directory* (Annually). To furnish a cheap and perfect advertising system. To obtain and furnish information, as a Bureau of Information. To investigate all public, private, civil, criminal and official matters, protect life and property as a Protective Organization, detect crime, expose fraud and assist in bringing criminals to justice, as a Detective Agency

PLANS OF OPERATIONS.

Superintendents will have charge of all matters of business at their postoffices, and keep the General Superintendent informed. Public representatives will give special attention to all business in the public department. Private operatives will protect life and property as a Private Protective Patrol, detect crime, expose fraud, and assist in bringing criminals to justice. Members of this Association will co-operate with public representatives, private operatives in a general way, and keep the superintendents in charge of local branch informed. The *American Detective* will be mailed to all superintendents (daily). All information not obtained through the American Detective, or otherwise will appear in the *American Detective Record* (monthly), and a copy mailed to each member of this Association, the *American Protective Directory* will contain the names and postoffice addresses of all superintendents of this Association, and other valuable information to be kept for reference. A copy will be furnished each member annually

ADVANTAGES AND BENEFITS TO MEMBERS OF THIS ASSOCIATION.

Each member will receive a certificate of membership, entitling them to advertising privileges and to all advantages of co-operation as members of a Protective Organization, one-half interest in all amounts offered as rewards, for information obtained by them, one year's subscription to the *American Detective Record*, and one copy of the *American Protective Directory*

Every law abiding citizen of Houston will be urged to become interested, and assist in the accomplishment of the objects sought. When the law abiding citizens organize, the lawless combines disband, and the results of which must be education, *law*, order and low rates. Your patronage solicited. I am yours to command,

J. W. COTTRELL,
President and General Superintendent.

Houston Office, 3rd Floor Fox Building, Corner Main and Preston Streets.

We have thousands of letters of endorsement from such officials and citizens as Gov. J. S. Hogg, Ex-Governor O. M. Roberts, Ex-Governor F. R. Lubbock, J. H. Reagan, Col. Hank Walton, Hon. A. W. Terrell, Judge John P. White, J. J. Faulk, Hon. R. G. Mills, etc

HOUSTON, TEXAS, October 18, 1890.

We, the undersigned officers and citizens of the City of Houston, having thoroughly investigated the plans and operations as arranged by J. W. Cottrell and adopted by *Cottrell's Protective and Detective Association of America*, and as a means of suppressing crime, in our opinion, cannot be excelled.

This Association is endorsed by many of the most prominent citizens of Texas. We ask for the Association the hearty co-operation of the good citizens of Houston.

John Kennedy Representative 27th Dist.
J. A. Breeding Member 23rd Legislature.
W. A. Maroney
Geo. Wm. Sheriff Harris County
W. W. Glass, Constable Precinct No. 1.
James H. Proctor City Marshal.
John T. Browne, Mayor of Houston.
J. G. Tod County Judge
P. L. Schwander J. P. Precinct No. 1.
J. T. Mahoney J. P. Precinct No. 1
C. F. Winkler County Clerk
J. R. Walton District Clerk
Martin Carroll Tax Collector
E. L. Jones, Superintendent
John Farmer Treasurer
W. A. Polk, Surveyor
A. W. McKinney Assessor
C. P. Jackson, Dept. City Assessor & Collector
J. S. White Assessor and Collector
C. M. LaVaine City Engineer
A. G. Gray Deputy Sheriff,
G. M. Tucker Deputy Sheriff
James B. January Deputy Sheriff
A. E. Anderson Deputy City Marshal.
D. R. Fox Deputy County Treasurer.
James Wilson Deputy Constable
James Fitzgerald Deputy Constable
A. J. Carmichael Penitentiary Agent.
R. E. Sutton Jailer Harris County.
Chas. Harris Dept. Sheriff Harris Co.
Wm. D. Cleveland
T. W. House.
Henry S. Fox.
M. T. Jones.
T. J. Boyles.
M. Tolbig Editor Anzeiger
R. M. Johnson, Editor Houston Post.
J. H. Sullivan.
Chas. Hawkes.
N. W. Floyd.
G. J. Palmer.
E. P. Hall Pres. Houston Post Pub. Co.
W. P. Curry (Gen'l Trav. Agt. Ho. Post.
James R. Masterson, Ex-District Judge.
James A. Baker, Jr.
L. B. Moody
I. P. Hutchison.
W. P. Oliver Ex District Attorney.
C. K. Ames
Walter F. Burns.
Henry J. Donnesbaum.
Lewis Burns.
W. B. Burchard. Ex-District Judge.
Elton Burns
James T. Spence
Tom M. Bowers, with Herald.
Tom Bowers
J. H. Baker
Max Rosenthal.
A. L. Autrey
Thos. G. Fitzs.
K. Coles.
James A. Cameron.
J. C. Renfrow
J. D. Parker
T. S. Lubbock.
Chas. B. Fikes.
R. W. Priest.
Geo. W. Gaines.
W. P. Arnold.
Geo. C. Davis.
I. C. Stafford
Jno. Milroy
David T. Crockett.
J. W. Jones, Ex-Sheriff Wharton Co
Wm. M. Thomas.
Tom O. Bolles, Ex Deputy U. S. M.
S. E. Spence, Ex-Reg. Morris Detect. Agcy.
G. W. Reynolds
Wm. O. Baldwin.
J. C. Hutcheson, Member of Congress.
J. J. Burroughs.
Wm. Martin.
Henry C. Thompson, Ex City Marshal.
Chas. Wichman Ex-City Marshal.
Jack White Ex City Marshal
Fred Erickson, Ex City Marshal.
Frank Rothmann
J. H. Palmer Editor Texas World
J. W. Townsend State Ranger
J. D. Staples.
J. W. Howard.

Texas State Archives

A broadside issued in the 1890s advertising Cottrell's Protective and Detective Association of America includes a truly impressive list of supporters.

"The risks of a detective were many and of extreme danger. In fact, he carried his life in his hands from minute to minute, and occasionally the 'bad men' snuffed out the light of life of a detective."
—Jack Duncan, 1895

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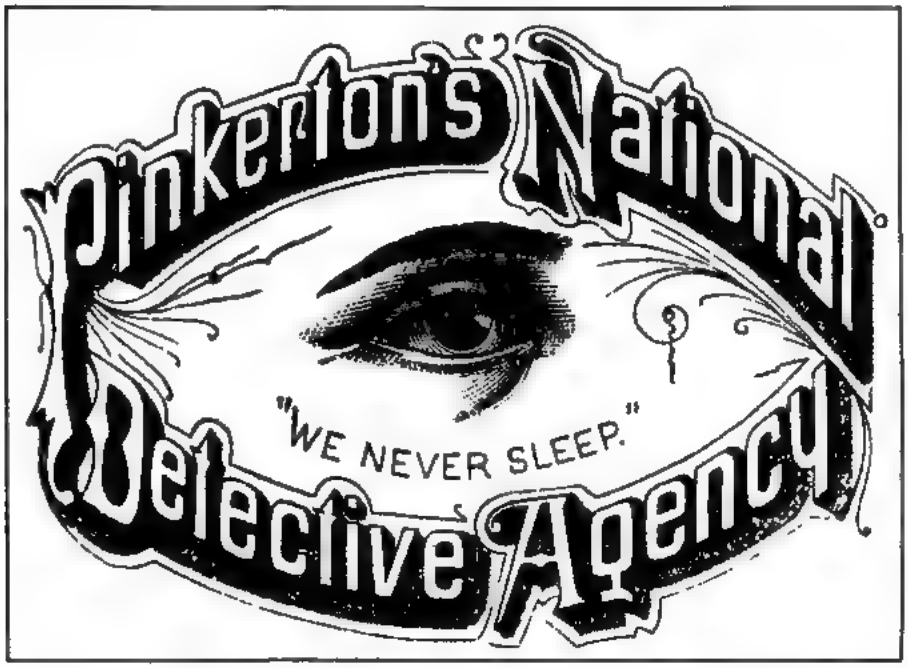
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Western Pub cations Photo

The Pinkerton Detective Agency provided a model for Fort Worth's much smaller-scale agencies.

The Pinkertons virtually invented the business and in the next thirty years built a national reputation. They also turned crime-fighting into big business. Their methods, their organization, and even their famous logo—the "eye that never sleeps"—were widely copied by a host of imitators.

state in 1878, his most vivid memory of the train ride from Dallas to Fort Worth was "the nervousness experienced in view of the recent train robberies that had been perpetrated."

A group of Fort Worth citizens, responding to what they saw as a breakdown of law and order, banded together in the fall of 1878 to form the Texas Detective Bureau, which they proudly advertised as "the first secret detective organization in the State." The first public announcement of their existence appeared in the *Fort Worth Democrat* on October 6 and gave no names of the founders. The bureau warned the *Democrat's* readers that "Its vigilant officers are unknown and undistinguishable, and it is only when their work is proclaimed that the public is made aware of their existence." Such a secretive organization sounded like it had more in common with the Ku Klux Klan than the Pinkertons, and since Texas was just emerging from Reconstruction, that is a reasonable assumption, although there is no historical connection between the two. At least one likely member was H.L. Foss, who, according to the city directory, boarded at the Dillon House and listed himself as simply a "detective."

The same announcement spoke of a "chief corresponding office" in the city, but gave no address, and the subsequent city directory contained no mention of the detective bureau by name or address. Interested parties were encouraged to direct all inquiries to a "lock box" in the city with the assurance that "they will receive ample and straightforward information from the efficient officers in charge." One has more than a sneaking suspicion that this was a vigilante group who did not want too much public attention focused on its operations.

THE CUSTOMERS the Bureau preferred were those with deep pockets and powerful political connections, and they openly solicited the business of "railroad, express, insurance, banking, steamboat and other corporations, the legal profession, merchants [and] business houses." At the end of the list were all other "individuals." Running down bail jumpers, finding lost persons, and getting the goods on unfaithful spouses were not part of the program. However, the bureau hastened to assure the good citizens of Fort Worth, "The honestly-disposed have nothing to fear from an organization like [ours]. In fact they read of it with indifference, unless they have suffered from the depredations of the classes to whom the Texas Detective Bureau is giving its very uncomfortable attention."

Like similar organizations all over the West, including the Pinkertons, the Texas Detective Bureau hoped to work closely with regular law enforcement agencies. This was only good public relations, since legally they were subordinate to the local sheriff and marshal where they operated. The bureau assured local authorities that "the object of the organization is far from opposed, or antagonistic, to other similar organizations, but rather acts in concert with them to aid the ends of justice." But in actuality, private detectives often looked down their noses at local law officers, who were considered little more than lackeys for the city council in the case of the city marshals, or politicians in the case of the county sheriffs.

AT THIS STAGE in the history of the West, law enforcement was not a chosen career but usually a second line of work or an avocation for men who spent most of their time at the gambling table. Policemen were not trained professionals but all-purpose municipal employees. They ran lodging houses for the homeless, tracked down offensive smells, rounded up stray animals, and kept the street lamps supplied with oil. They also cleared dead animals off the streets and washed out the jail after a long weekend. In between, they occasionally caught criminals, as long as the suspect's identity was known and he was still in the vicinity. Otherwise, crime-fighting was left up to the free enterprise system. The decade-old Fort Worth police department did not get its first detective until 1883, when William M. Rea was elevated to that position from the regular, uniformed force.

Before the Texas Detective Bureau opened for business, Fort Worth had only City Marshal Timothy Isaiah Courtright and his four deputies and Sheriff John M. Henderson to fight crime on a regular basis. Other agencies like the Texas Express Company; Wells, Fargo; and the Texas & Pacific railroad were very selective about what crimes they investigated. Unless their own particular interests or property were violated, they did not put themselves

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Author's Photo

The south end of Fort Worth around the turn of the century, looking north on Throckmorton Street. One block to the left of picture was Hell's Half Acre, a favorite hangout of Fort Worth's wilder element.

out chasing down criminals.

Courtright was something of a local celebrity, known as a fast-draw and a tough man with his fists. Elected in 1876, he was the city's sixth marshal in three years, but the first to serve out a full term. Courtright was elected to two more terms before his bullying, unprincipled ways wore thin with voters who turned him out of office in 1879. The ex-marshal hung around the city a couple of years, working at odd jobs and making a nuisance of himself, until he got a call to go to New Mexico and put his guns to work as a regulator for some of the territory's big cattlemen. Unfortunately, he was accused of murder in New Mexico and fled the territory. By the summer of 1883, he was back in Fort Worth and looking for a new line of work that would utilize his reputation, his connections, and his only skill, gunfighting.

Courtright found the ideal line of work for a man of his reputation and limited talents when he opened the T.I.C. Commercial Detective Association in 1883. The name came from his own initials plus a little chutzpah. It was obviously a small-time operation, but Courtright had big ambitions and took as his model the nationally-known Pinkerton Detective Agency—he even adopted their symbol, the all-seeing eye. Courtright inserted the eye between the T. and the C. in his name for advertising, and eventually had a sign with that logo painted on the side of his office headquarters. He also had business cards printed up which stopped short of saying "Have Gun—Will Travel" but did offer to "transact any legitimate detective business, such as collecting evidence in criminal cases, finding lost people, collecting bills, etc." Though the locals knew him better as "Longhair Jim" rather than Timothy Isaiah, the cards read "T.J. [sic] Courtright," and gave him the grand-sounding title of "President and General Manager." One of those cards, carried by his saddle buddy and fellow fugitive from the New Mexico murder charge, Jim McIntire, eventually found its way to Denver. There, local lawmen confiscated it when they arrested McIntire.

COURTRIGHT'S business did not prosper, partly because there was not enough work in a city the size of Fort Worth, but mostly because he spent too much time gambling and drinking. His not-too-promising career came to a temporary halt in October 1884 when a New Mexico sheriff, accompanied by Texas Rangers with an extradition order, showed up in town to arrest him. They successfully took Courtright into custody, but before they could get him on a train out of town his friends staged a spectacular escape. Among those who took part were four detectives of the Commercial Detective Association.

After a year on the lam, Courtright surrendered himself to authorities and returned to New Mexico to face the murder charges against him. But the evidence was weak and witnesses were unwilling to testify, so all charges were dropped. He was soon back in Fort Worth determined to get the Commercial Detective Association going again, but this time on a more profitable basis. He used his connections in the city's gambling fraternity to establish a "protection racket," possibly the first in the history of the West. His new partner was an unsavory character named Charley Bull, who knew even less about criminal investigation and law enforcement than Courtright did, if that was possible.

The two men made the rounds on

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Main and Rusk streets extorting regular payments from the city's numerous gamblers and saloonkeepers to screen out the riff-raff and keep local authorities off their backs; they threatened violence if they were not paid regularly. This ham-fisted approach worked on the "downtown" boys in Hell's Half Acre who were used to operating on the shady side of the law, but the well-heeled uptown gamblers like Luke Short, Jake Johnson, and their out-of-town friends like Bat Masterson, were not so easily intimidated.

Detective Courtright also hired out his gun as a "Special Officer" to the Missouri Pacific during a rail workers' strike in 1886, which, in a railroad town like Fort Worth, was hardly calculated to win him popularity among the mass of laboring men. The company paid well for strikebreakers, which is what Courtright and the other "Special Officers" actually were, but the ex-marshal hurt his local image in the process. When the strike finally ended, he faced the prospect of having even fewer local customers than before. His response was to up his collections from the local gamblers and saloonkeepers. They grumbled loudly but could not realistically go to the local authorities, and no one was willing to face Courtright across six-guns—at least not until the detective and his partner began putting the squeeze on Luke Short in the winter of 1886–87. At the time Short was running the very profitable gambling concession over the White Elephant Saloon on Main Street, in partnership with Jake Johnson. Short was not interested in any "protection" Courtright had to offer, and he was not impressed by Courtright's reputation with a gun. Short had something of a reputation himself as a pistoleer.

On the night of February 8, 1887, Short and Courtright had it out when the former refused flatly to join Courtright's protection scheme. Courtright, who had the bigger reputation as a gunfighter, came out on the losing end this time, and when he died the Commercial Detective Association died with him. Without Courtright's reputation and gun to back him up, Charley Bull could not hold the operation together, and he soon skipped town. All that was left of the T.I.C. Commercial Detective Association was the memory of Courtright and a fading sign that was still faintly visible on the side of a building thirty years later.

During the time Courtright was on the lam from the law, his old friend, Henry Andrew "Heck" Thomas also experienced some serious career reversals. Thomas worked for the Texas Express Company. In the spring of 1885 he decided to leave the company because it was having financial problems competing with bigger corporations, and was cutting both wages and employees. Thomas got out and promptly ran for city marshal of Fort Worth. He lost a hotly-contested race in which questionable voting procedures more than likely made the final difference. Here was another out-of-work lawman with a family to support and no immediate prospects in sight.

A possible $3,500 payoff was a good prospect, but the job would require Heck Thomas to cross the Red River into Indian Territory, something local officers and even US marshals were reluctant to do. Indian Territory was a hideout for every cattle rustler, cutthroat, and desperado in the Southwest.

COURTRIGHT had once suggested to Thomas that a man who was handy with a gun and had plenty of nerve could make a nice living without a badge. Now Courtright was gone and the Commercial Detective Association had at least temporarily suspended operations. Since the city was short one private detective agency, Heck Thomas opened the Fort Worth Detective Association in the spring of 1885. While his personal reputation was considerably better than Courtright's, business on the whole was rather slow. His ethical standards were also higher than Courtright's, however, so he refused to pick up the local protection racket where Courtright had dropped it when he was forced to skip town.

Thomas' first big case was an out-of-town job, offered by a wealthy North Texas cattleman named Alva Roff, who strolled into the office one day and offered a $2,500 reward for the murderers of his two brothers. Those murderers were a vicious pair of brothers named Jim and Pink Lee, who also happened to have an additional $1,000 reward on their heads offered by the state of Texas for murder and cattle rustling.

A possible $3,500 payoff was a good prospect, but the job would require Thomas to cross the Red River into Indian Territory, something local officers and even US marshals were reluctant to do. Indian Territory was a hideout for every cattle rustler, cutthroat, and desperado in the Southwest. That was a much bigger job than collecting unpaid bills or finding lost people, or even squeezing the local gamblers. Only a handful of men, given a choice, would have taken it—Heck Thomas did. As Thomas later told John Carroll, US marshal for the Western District, he went after the Lee boys both for the reward and for the challege of bringing in a pair of badmen that "nobody believed. . . could be brought in." Few would have tried it, and even fewer would have brought it off successfully.

THOMAS LEFT Fort Worth on horseback on June 5 and did not return until the middle of September. He took a trusted lawman friend with him, Jim Taylor of Dallas. They spent most of their time crisscrossing Indian Territory, looking for the Lee brothers. When they finally caught up with them, the Lees resisted and Thomas and Taylor shot them. They took the bodies back to Gainesville to file for the reward.

By the time Thomas got back to Fort Worth, he had not seen his family for three months and he had lost nearly forty pounds, from 171 to 132, in the process. On top of all that, Courtright was back in town and intent on re-establishing himself as the *only* private detective in Fort Worth. It is doubtful if Courtright would even have accepted the job Thomas had just finished and almost as doubtful that he would even have been offered it. He was not fond of the rough life, and dogged perseverence was not a quality for which he was known. He preferred to collect his money in town using less strenuous methods.

Thomas, regarded for the second time in his life as a genuine hero, posed a real threat to Longhair Jim for the city's affections and private detective business. Governor John Ireland declared Thomas' accomplishment "one of the most remarkable in the history of Texas law enforcement." The fame and respect that came with the Lee job brought him several attractive offers, including one to run for Tarrant County sheriff on the Democratic ticket (the only ticket worth

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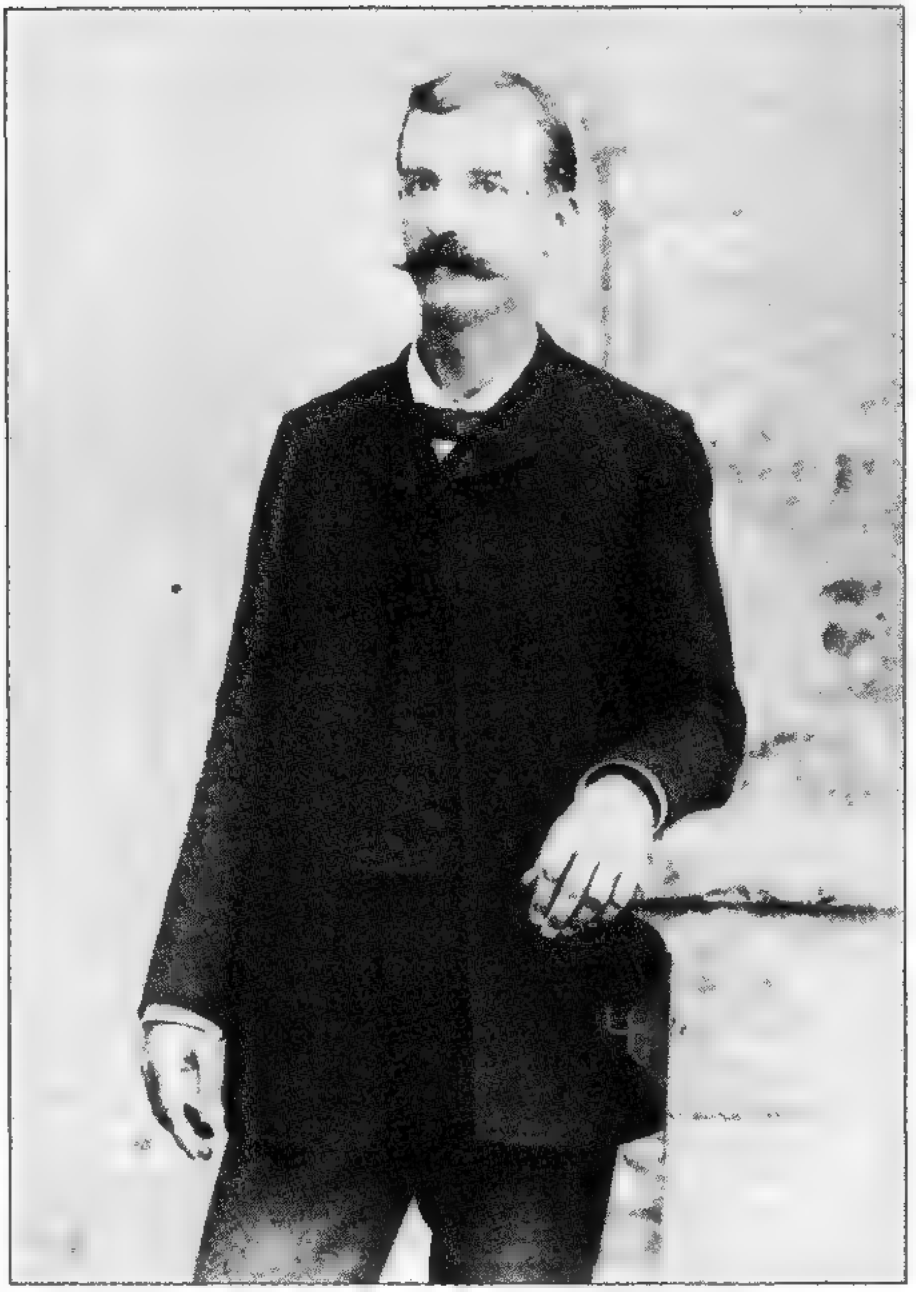
running on in Texas at that time) and another to join the Texas Rangers. Instead, he preferred to use his newfound fame to secure a position with the US marshals working the Western District out of Fort Smith, Arkansas. He never regretted the decision to get out of the private detective business, although his share of the $3,500 he earned for three months' work was far more than Courtright earned—legitimately, as least—in his two years or more as a private detective. For better or for worse, Courtright had the private detective business in Fort Worth in his pocket until his death in 1887.

The 1880s also saw the private detective business established just thirty miles away in Fort Worth's "sister city," Dallas. The man chiefly responsible was Jack Duncan, king of the private detectives in Texas during those years. Duncan first came to Texas as a young man in the early 1870s, moving from Kentucky to settle in Dallas. He joined the Texas Rangers and began creating his legend by capturing famed outlaw John Wesley Hardin in 1877. Later that same year Duncan left the Texas Rangers, probably, as his biographer, Rick Miller, suggests, because he "liked the public attention he received and became frustrated with the routine of investigative work for the Rangers." In short, he could make more money and add to his own reputation outside the military-style Rangers organization. Texas, indeed the whole Southwest, was full of outlaws, many with substantial rewards on their heads. A man could make a nice living by freelancing his skills.



Glenn Shirley Photo

Heck Thomas as a United States deputy marshal at Fort Smith, Arkansas, in 1886. For a time Thomas posed the only real threat to the T.I.C. Detective Agency.

DUNCAN followed the same path as other detectives of the time by first establishing his reputation as an organization man before going out on his own. Courtright first made a name for himself as a three-term marshal of Fort Worth, and Thomas won fame and recognition as a Texas Express agent who foiled one of Sam Bass' holdups. Duncan, like Courtright and Thomas, was able to capitalize on his fame and translated it into bigger paychecks.

Detective work in the West was not a matter of sitting around waiting for someone to walk in and drop a case on the desk. It was a rare exception when Alva Roff sought out Heck Thomas to find the Lee brothers. More often than not, detectives drummed up business by seeking out employers, much like modern ambulance-chasing lawyers, but without the professional stigma. Duncan spent eight action-filled years as a private detective and aggressively sought out most of his business. In one fairly normal case he wrote a letter to Texas Governor Richard B. Hubbard "requesting a requisition for the arrest of Mitch Cotton," a fugitive wanted for the murder of the Limestone County sheriff. The requisition came back as requested. During his time as a Dallas-based private detective, Duncan brought in at least seventeen wanted men by his own count, earning rewards totalling $12,050. He told a reporter for the *Dallas Daily Times Herald* in 1895, "In that period I captured more criminals and collected a larger amount of reward money than any other three private detectives in Texas."

Like Courtright and other members of the detective fraternity, Duncan was more at home with the riff-raff he often brought in than with polite society. That penchant for choosing friends from the wrong side of the law was one of the things that got Courtright killed and left Duncan lying on the floor of a Dallas bordello with a bullet through the back in February 1878. Duncan's near-fatal wound kept him from joining the chase after Sam Bass, and Dallas newspapers lamented his absence at the time: "If Jack Duncan were only well now, it wouldn't take long to bag . . . the train robbers. Hurry up Jack, and get after

'em." Many concerned citizens who had little faith in their legally elected officers shared those sentiments.

Not all private detective work consisted of chasing stage and train robbers, or even murderers. In fact, the majority of the work targeted cattle rustlers and horse thieves, which is not surprising as most men depended on horses or cattle for their livelihood if not for their very survival. Before they became murderers, Pink and Jim Lee were notorious cattle rustlers, and the high reward on their heads reflected their success in that area as much as their murderous ways. Cattlemen like Alva Roff were willing to pay top dollar to steely-nerved men like Heck Thomas and Jack Duncan to put rustlers out of business. Such private detectives had more time and more incentive than regular law officers to spend weeks or even months on the trail tracking down elusive rustlers because they were self-employed and the rewards were high. Since North Texas was cattle country, business was never lacking for a detective with entrepreneurial spirit—and entrepreneurial spirit was one thing besides gun-slinging that all private detectives had in common.

Not all private detective work consisted of chasing stage and train robbers, or even murderers. In fact, the majority of the work targeted cattle rustlers and horse thieves, which is not surprising as most men depended on horses or cattle for their livelihood if not for their very survival.

SOMETIME, probably before 1882, Jack Duncan and his father James A. Duncan opened the Protective and Detective Association of Texas in Dallas, setting up their first office over a bookstore in the Gouffe Building. Their principal business, as they explained in their newspaper ads, was to protect livestock and catch rustlers. They did so by branding and keeping a record of all animals registered with their firm—for a reasonable fee, of course. Their brand was the letter "C" placed on the left jaw of the animal. It was registered with the State of Texas, and the Duncans promised that if one of their registered animals was stolen, they would track down and find the thief or thieves. In less than ten years their business had grown to the point where they had branch offices in Atoka, Indian Territory; Fort Smith, Arkansas; Wichita, Kansas; and Denver, Colorado. Furthermore, they were able to boast, "Of stock registered and branded with this association only about one-seventeenth are stolen, and of those ninety-five per cent are recovered, as the books show." When their business boomed, they also moved their Dallas offices to rooms over Delmonico's Restaurant on Main Street. Their long-term success far outshone that of either of the two premier private eyes of Cowtown, T.I. Courtright or Heck Thomas. For the first time, private detecting in the Lone Star state had become a true business, with a successful balance sheet and an air of professionalism.

The Duncans' success and the demand of cattlemen all over Texas for an effective "regulator" force to protect their herds may have inspired the greatest private detective agency ever organized in Texas—Cottrell's Protective and Detective Association of America, founded in Houston in 1883. While proclaiming their intention to "detect crime, expose fraud, and assist in bringing criminals to justice," there was no doubt, in the beginning at least, that most of their business would come from cattlemen. J.W. Cottrell was president and central superintendent of the agency. It was organized on a far grander scale than anything Dallas or Fort Worth had seen, issuing capital stock worth $100,000 when it eventually incorporated in 1894. The name alone was enough to put the fear of corporate America into any rustler or other miscreant unlucky enough to draw their attention. To drive the point home, Cottrell's distributed thousands of broadsides across the state which listed "About One Hundred of Texas' most Substantial Citizens as Stockbrokers"—with titles, including sheriffs and ex-sheriffs, marshals and ex-marshals, congressmen and district attorneys. They also claimed to have "thousands of letters of endorsement" from governors, ex-governors, lawyers, judges, and the like. As their name implies, they set their sights far beyond Houston or even Texas. The association even put out three regular publications: a daily newspaper, a monthly magazine, and an annual directory. Cottrell's Protective and Detective Association of America represented the highest evolution of the independent private detective in Texas. They never overtook the older and better-known Pinkerton Detective Agency, but they showed just how far crime-fighting had come in the Wild West.

Beginning with the faceless Texas Detective Bureau and continuing with T.I. Courtright, Heck Thomas, and Jack Duncan, the cowboy private detective in Texas moved out of the shadow of regular law enforcement and achieved respectable status. But Duncan and Courtright proved the private detective was often on both sides of the law. Court records in Dallas and Fort Worth are full of cases in the 1880s where the two self-styled detectives were the defendants. The charges ranged from gambling to carrying a pistol, public intoxication, and even aggravated assault. Most private detectives at that time were cut from the same cloth, being little more than "gangsters" and bounty hunters behind the cognomen of "detective." Thomas' honesty and high morals were a breath of fresh air in a seedy profession, but it is notable that he lasted less than a year as a private detective before giving it up to become a low-paid US marshal in Indian Territory.

Just like today, gumshoes back then tended to be ex-lawmen who could use their connections and reputations to launch profitable second careers in which they did not have to answer either to voters or higher authorities. They were a law unto themselves in frontier communities barely above lawlessness. In an age when there was little professionalism among lawmen, they violated few established ethics by working as quasi-lawmen. The boundaries between private detectives and law officers were never well defined. There were no licensing standards in those days, so any man who was so inclined could open an office, hang out a shingle, and call himself a "private detective." Critics often called them bounty hunters.

While the Pinkertons and probably Cottrell's were efficient and tightly run organizations, most private detectives were nothing but common gunmen with a little business flair. They cashed in on the lack of law and order in the West, lax gun laws, and the free enterprise system. In the process, they also filled a gap in the evolutionary progression from the lawless frontier to the age of genuine professional law enforcement.

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By DAVID P. ROBROCK

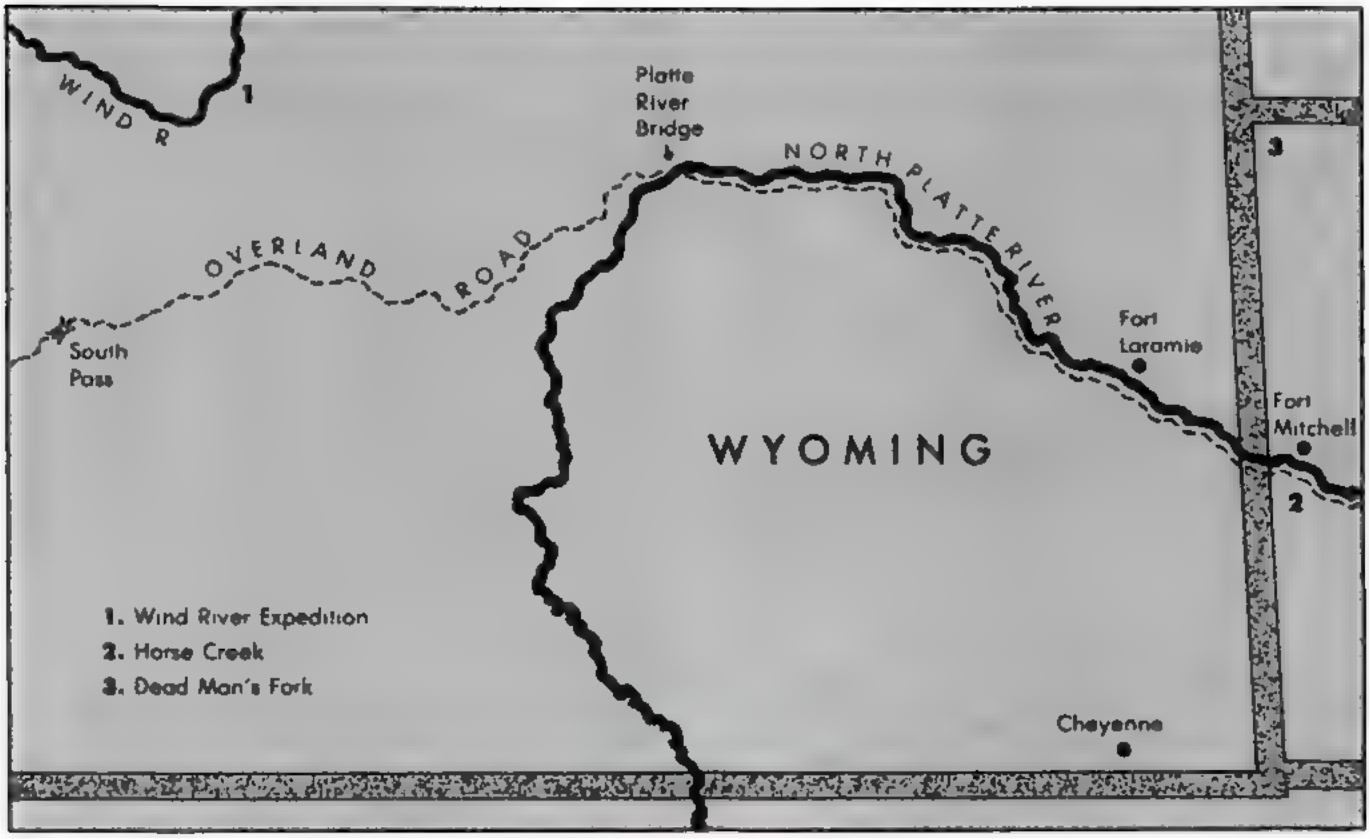
Illustrations by E. LISLE REEDSTROM

On a warm morning in June 1865, a large group of cavalry approached the Deadman's Fork of Hat Creek in the far northwest corner of Nebraska. They had been riding since early morning to intercept a large band of Sioux moving northward to the Powder River country in northeastern Wyoming. The cavalry commander, Colonel Thomas Moonlight, believed he was approaching his foe and halted to give his men some rest and a chance to eat before engaging in combat. A tall, broad-shouldered man with a flowing brown beard, Moonlight had little inkling that he was about to move into history, as a footnote perhaps, but nonetheless as the commander in a skirmish that would be recounted many times, never to his credit.

The thirty-two-year-old Colonel Moonlight commanded the Eleventh Kansas Cavalry Regiment. Nothing in his brief military career indicated that he was not suited for the unconventional warfare of the western frontier. Moonlight had served as an enlisted man in the army from 1853 to 1858, then settled on a farm near Leavenworth, Kansas. The Civil War brought a dramatic change in his fortunes. He raised a volunteer artillery battery in 1861 and was commissioned a captain. Combat and staff assignments followed. He joined the Eleventh Kansas Cavalry as lieutenant colonel in 1862, took part in campaigns along the Kansas-Missouri border, and was promoted to full colonel and commander of the regiment in 1864. Then, as the Civil War wound down, his regiment was transferred to the western plains as part of the reinforcements for a projected offensive against the hostile Sioux, Cheyennes, and Arapahoe.

Moonlight's regiment went to Fort Laramie, and he went to Denver as commander of the District of Colorado. He assumed command on January 4, 1865, just as a new outbreak of fighting erupted. The previous year, scattered Indian raids had occurred in the territory, which was garrisoned by an assortment of militia units, local regiments, and a few volunteer regiments from eastern states. On November 28, 1864, Colonel John M. Chivington led the Third Colorado Cavalry, a regiment mustered in for 100 days' service, in an attack on a Cheyenne village at Sand Creek, in southeastern Colorado. Better known as the Sand Creek Massacre, the attack resulted in the deaths of over a hundred Indian men, women, and children. Moonlight assumed command just as the Indians were about to retaliate.

Upon his arrival at Denver, Moonlight discovered that with the mustering out of the Third Colorado, he had only about 200 soldiers under his direct command. A few days later the Sioux and the Cheyennes went on the rampage, attacking traffic and scattered settlements along the Overland Road in northeastern Colorado, then the most densely populated region on the western frontier. Panic and political discord



Moonlight led his troopers through a late spring snow storm across present-day Wyoming.

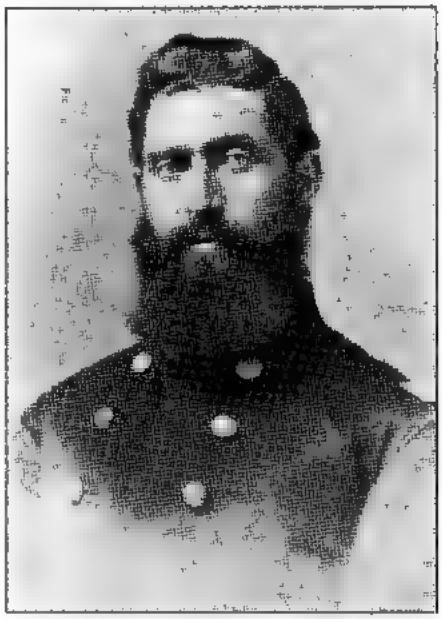
dman's Fork

ensued among the settlers. Moonlight found himself besieged with demands to take action. Noting there were no troops in the Denver area, he complained to his superiors about locals, "who cannot believe but that I ought to start after the savages with nothing more than my headquarters [staff]."

Moonlight declared martial law and ordered the mustering of a militia of 360 men. His order to the militia commander was clear: "Your mission is to protect the whites and kill the redskins." The troops saw no action and the crisis had passed by the end of February, but his actions were questioned in Washington, where raising troops without permission was viewed unfavorably.

Fortunately, at the end of the month a major military reorganization occurred on the frontier. The commands on the northern plains were combined into the District of the Plains under Brigadier General Patrick E. Connor, a California volunteer officer. Moonlight was reassigned as commander of the North Sub-District headquartered at Fort Laramie, where he rejoined his regiment. The transfer was not a demotion, as the North Sub-District was Connor's front line. By April most of the hostile bands had moved north of the Sweetwater and North Platte rivers, and Moonlight was ordered to make sure the Indians stayed north of the rivers while Connor concentrated forces for an offensive.

Fort Laramie was a key post on the overland road and a major base of operations for the Indian Wars. During the disturbances of 1864 troops at the fort had seen extensive action. When Moonlight arrived he found the post consisted of a couple dozen buildings scattered on an open plain near the North Platte River. The post had always served as a major headquarters and now protected an area which encompassed the overland road from Julesburg, Colorado, to the South Pass, nearly 500 miles. The only inhabited localities along this stretch of road were the occasional stage and telegraph stations. Moonlight had at his disposal only the understrength Eleventh Ohio Cavalry, the newly arrived Eleventh Kansas Cavalry, and assorted cavalry detachments.



Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas
Thomas Moonlight.

With the mustering out of the Third Colorado, Moonlight had only about 200 soldiers under his direct command. A few days later the Sioux and the Cheyennes went on the rampage, attacking traffic and scattered settlements along the Overland Road in northeastern Colorado.

The Eleventh Ohio was scattered among several small posts, and Moonlight's main strike force was his Eleventh Kansas. The regiment was short one-third of its horses, and finding replacement mounts was a major problem on the frontier that year. Connor reported in April that there were not 400 horses fit for field service in his entire district. The horse situation was exacerbated by the fact that corn-fed cavalry horses could not subsist long on prairie grass. But the shortage of horses did not deter Moonlight from taking action. An eventful six weeks in the history of the Indian Wars was about to begin.

He rode west from Fort Laramie on May 3 to inspect his command, and at the Platte River Bridge heard that a large band of Cheyennes was encamped on the Wind River, 200 miles to the west. Moonlight quickly assembled 500 cavalrymen, mostly from the Eleventh Kansas, and set out across the snow-covered prairies at once. He moved at night, "the better to beguile the Indians," he informed Connor. It snowed for two days, and the horses had difficulty finding adequate grazing under a blanket of snow. The troops fared little better, each man having only a wool blanket and an overcoat. Finally, on the morning of May 12, they reached the area and found the Cheyennes long gone. By that time Moonlight's command was short of rations and nearly half of their horses "were given out, for the [available] grass was not sufficient to keep them in heart."

MOONLIGHT started his force back that night and reached Fort Laramie on May 21, having ridden over 500 miles on a wild goose chase, during which he lost many horses. He reported to Connor that the Indians must have followed his movements closely, for no sooner had he reached the fort than war parties were attacking stage stations in his area of responsibility. "They are keen for a tussle, believing they can clean us out, and there is some semblance of excuse for this belief from their recent successes," Moonlight wrote, apparently oblivious of his recent contribution to their feelings.

Upon his return to the fort, Moonlight discovered that two Sioux Indian chiefs, Two Face and Black Foot of the Oglalas, had come in professing peace and a desire to facilitate negotiations between the two sides. As a sign of their good faith they brought with them Lucinda Eubanks and her daughter, whom the Cheyennes had captured in Nebraska the previous summer. The Sioux chiefs had ransomed them over to the soldiers. Moonlight was shocked by Lucinda's condition, reporting to Connor that "she was almost naked and told some horrible tales of the barbarity and cruelty of the Indians." He ordered the chiefs hanged and did not have their bodies let down for several weeks, believing that the sight would intimidate the hostile

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Two Face and Black Foot of the Oglalas had come in professing peace. As a sign of their good faith they brought with them Lucinda Eubanks and her daughter, whom the Cheyennes had captured in Nebraska the previous summer. The Sioux chiefs had ransomed them over to the soldiers.

Indians. That result is doubtful, though it must have caused the peaceably inclined to wonder a bit.

Moonlight had barely disposed of the chiefs when another problem came to a head. A large number of Indians wanting to separate from the hostile Indians had gathered in a camp ten miles east of Fort Laramie. The army was suspicious of their intentions and the cost of supplying the camp was becoming prohibitive. Connor ordered the Indians moved to Fort Kearny in central Nebraska, where they could be better supervised and supplied. The majority of the camp was composed of Sioux, and the proposed move would place them in the midst of their traditional enemies, the Pawnees.

Moonlight ordered the Indians to move to Fort Kearny, but allowed them to retain their horses and weapons. Whether that was Connor's intention is unknown, but it had a major impact on what followed. Moonlight assigned 135 men from the Seventh Iowa Cavalry to escort the column to Fort Kearny. The uneasy convoy, numbering between 1,500 and 2,000 Indian men, women, and children, moved out from Fort Laramie on June 11, following the overland road along the south bank of the North Platte River. On the morning of June 14 the Indians mutinied at a campsite on Horse Creek, just over the Nebraska border. The Indians began crossing to the north bank of the North Platte River, and skirmished with the Iowa cavalry.

The first word received at Fort Laramie had the Iowa troops locked in desperate battle. Moonlight promptly assembled a force of 140 men and rode eastward to rescue the Iowans. After covering nine miles he learned that the cavalry had broken contact and that the Indians had fled north across the North Platte River, and probably intended to join hostile bands in the Powder River country in northeastern Wyoming.

Moonlight returned to Fort Laramie and assembled a force of 234 men from the Eleventh Kansas, the Sixteenth Kansas, the Eleventh Ohio, and the Second California regiments. The Eleventh Ohio and the Second California were seasoned frontier volunteer cavalry regiments, and Moonlight's force comprised a formidable mounted army. The cavalry's weak point was the condition of its horses.

The men rode out at a good gait on the morning of June 15 and headed southeast along the north bank of the North Platte to the battle site approximately forty miles from Fort Laramie and made camp. The next morning the column picked up the trail of the fleeing Indian band and rode due north. But the condition of their horses was so poor that 103 men had to drop out and return to the fort within forty-eight hours. Thus Moonlight's dwindling force numbered 131 men with which to battle an estimated 2,000 Indians. But conventional wisdom on the frontier held that a trained and disciplined force could defeat several times their number. So Moonlight confidently rode forward.

THE CAVALRYMEN covered a hundred miles in two days. On the morning of June 17 they got underway early and rode twenty miles before halting for breakfast on the Deadman's Fork of Hat Creek. The troopers made camp, unsaddled their horses, and corralled them in a ravine formed by the high bluffs on either side of the creek bed. The Californians, comprising two-thirds of the force, lacked proper halters and pickets with which to secure their mounts, but thought that the impromptu corral would be sufficient.

The troopers had barely settled down to eat and rest when sentries interrupted their repose with cries of approaching Indians. A party of an estimated 200 warriors rode toward the camp. The soldiers picked up their carbines, quickly formed a skirmish line, and opened fire.

The Indians wheeled about and rode a mile from the camp, where they halted. Moonlight ordered a detachment to mount up and pursue them. As the cavalrymen approached the corral they found that the horses, in Moonlight's words, "had become frantic with fear" from the rifle fire and general commotion. The rapid approach of the men apparently provided the final spark. The horses reared up and stampeded out of the corral.

The men formed an impromptu line with Colonel Moonlight among them,

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waving their hands trying to stop the horses. The horses ignored the men and ran through the line. In frustration a Kansas officer drew his pistol and shot at the fleeing animals.

Seventy-four of the unit's one hundred thirty-one horses ran through the skirmish line and out onto the prairies toward the Indians. The Indians at first thought the cavalrymen were attacking and scattered. Upon realizing that the horses were riderless, they wheeled about and herded the animals off.

Moonlight ordered twenty-five men to mount up on the remaining horses and bring back the rest of the herd. The men saddled up and set out in pursuit. Eventually they caught up with the Indian war party, which had grown to 400 warriors. Several of the warriors challenged the cavalrymen in English to fight. In view of the odds, the troopers prudently withdrew.

After the mounted force returned, there was nothing for Moonlight's men to do but destroy the useless saddles and other equipment and start the long walk back to Fort Laramie. Two men had been wounded in the encounter and Moonlight estimated that four Indians had been killed and several wounded. Fortunately the Indians were satisfied with their booty and did not attack, for dismounted cavalrymen were at a distinct disadvantage on the open prairies. Moonlight's men could have been massacred. As it was, the walk back was difficult, made worse by the hot weather and lack of water.

THE DISGRUNTLED men reached Fort Laramie on June 20. Moonlight immediately filed a report on the incident and vowed never again to undertake an operation so poorly equipped. He did not have to worry, as Connor, by now disgusted with the incompetent young colonel's activities, relieved him of command and ordered him mustered out of service, commenting to his superiors that Moonlight's "administration here was a series of blunders."

Connor was dissatisfied with Moonlight's four major activities: the ill-advised ride to the Wind River; the hanging of two Indian chiefs professing peace; allowing the column of Sioux to depart from Fort Laramie with their weapons and horses; and finally having his horses run off at Dead Man's Fork. It would be easy to dismiss Moonlight as a buffoon or a hothead who plunged into things without proper consideration. But he had performed well in the conventional Civil War campaigns in Kansas and Missouri, in both command and staff assignments. Moonlight's problems were probably due more to the difficulty of adjusting from conventional to unconventional warfare.

Seventy-four of the unit's one hundred thirty-one horses ran through the skirmish line and out onto the prairies toward the Indians.

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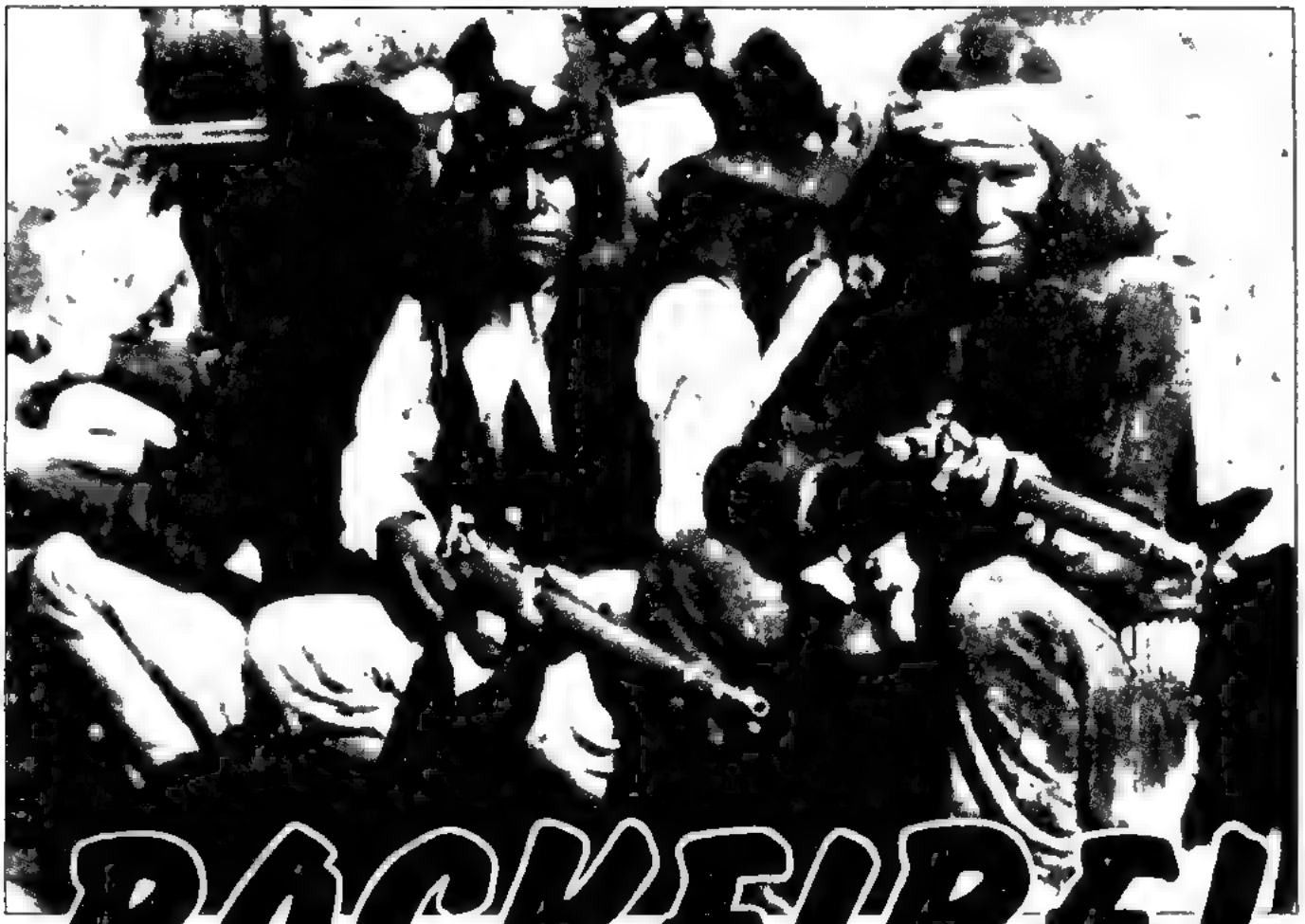

BACKFIRE!

Indians and Firearms

By BENNETT VIKEN and ROBIN SUTTON

In the struggle for control of North America, which culminated in the last battles in the West, the American Indian proved himself a brave and vigorous fighter. While his tactics were often brilliant, he had no overall strategy; rarely did bands or tribes work together to fight encroaching whites. That lack of a master strategy undoubtedly accelerated the Indians' defeat, but another, subtler factor was at work almost from the first encounter of Europeans and Indians—an element that disrupted Indian warfare by eroding its weapons base. The crisis of arms did not result from any conscious European strategy; the Indians brought it on themselves by embracing the white men's guns.

As in the clash of all cultures, the one with the more advanced, dynamic technology offered the more temptations. Indians eagerly pursued the Europeans' goods. They surrendered rich pelts of ermine and beaver for common iron pots. In early rendezvous a sixty-five-dollar horse was the asking price for a two-dollar butcher knife. But of all the beads, pots, knives, and miscellany in the Europeans' inventory, nothing so captivated the Indians as the gun.

That is hardly surprising. The white man's great, flashing, exploding sticks were by all accounts very popular with the Indians. Plumes of smoke, a loud report, and a distant, seemingly invisible impact were truly magic to those ignorant of gunpowder. Soon every warrior had to have one of the thunder sticks.

Indian weaponry, while primitive, was nonetheless effective. Close order weapons included clubs, tomahawks, and knives. As a last resort those weapons could also be thrown. The Indians had a sling, too, although it appears to have been primarily a children's toy. Spears and lances offered more range and were particularly dangerous when employed from horseback. Some tribes also developed a light throwing javelin. But by far the single most widely used, stand-off weapon was the bow and arrow.

While the Indians of the eastern woodlands preferred a slightly longer bow, the Plains Indians made theirs thirty-two to forty-eight inches long. Shorter bows were requisite for fast handling from horseback. The bow was made of a long, even-grained, knot-free piece of hardwood. Indians preferred ash but also used other hardwoods such as hickory and elm. The bows were short but strong and powerful. The power of a bow is measured by pull-weight, the number of pounds needed to pull the string to full draw. The pull-weight is largely determined by the thickness of wood at the throat, or middle, of the bow. Indian bows ranged from about

thirty-five to fifty-five or more pounds of pull. At twenty yards, a forty-pound bow can put an arrow completely through a fully grown black bear.

The Indians usually chose cedar, with its long, straight, narrow limbs, to make arrows a little longer than two feet. For fletching they chose the feathers from larger birds such as sage hens, turkeys, wild geese, buzzards, and eagles, preferring the stiff flight feathers from wingtips and tails. The feathers were mounted in an evenly spaced group of three around the back end of the arrow just ahead of the string's nock. Blood grooves were used as decoration, but they also had the practical purpose of keeping a wound bleeding, hastening death. Iron heads greatly improved lethality over flint and obsidian points. At close range the average iron-headed arrow could penetrate timber farther than the ball from a .36 caliber Colt Navy. For bowstrings, Indians pounded the ligaments and tendons from deer and buffalo until they were flexible, then stretched and braided them.

The Indians surrendered rich pelts of ermine and beaver for common iron pots. In early rendezvous a sixty-five-dollar horse was the asking price for a two-dollar butcher knife. But of all the beads, pots, knives, and miscellany in the Europeans' inventory, nothing so captivated the Indians as the gun.

Riding to battle, the Indian was superbly equipped for rapid, repeated fire. Guiding his mount with shifts of weight and leg pressure, the warrior kept his hands free to carry his bow with an arrow nocked in the string, two more in his bow hand, another between his teeth, and a buckskin quiver full of missiles across his back.

The bow and arrow was a native, natural weapon system. It was easy to replace lost or damaged elements of the system from supplies at hand. Even the iron for the arrowheads was readily gathered from the many castoff oddments generated by the white man. The Indian could retire at his leisure to replenish any part—or all—of the weapon system. He could make repairs in the safety of his bastions in the wild without the necessity of supply depots or support personnel. Such self-reliance is an advantage for any military force; it is a major advantage for a primitive one.

Much has been made of the gun's superiority, but in the early years, until the Mexican War era brought refinements in percussion arms, its advantage over bows and arrows was slim to nonexistent. The bow cast an arrow by mechanical means. While a potent system, its limitations were downrange, where fast-falling trajectories reduced accuracy and power. Those drawbacks made the arrow a killer by hemorrhage rather than by shock. The broad, razor-sharp head severed as many arteries as shot placement permitted.

The gun, on the other hand, propelled its projectile by explosion, driving the bullet to cause a much greater impact downrange. The greater energy enabled the bullet to kill by shock as well as tissue damage. A .30 caliber bullet could kill a 150-pound whitetail deer by passing within six inches of its heart. A bullet could also shatter bones over ranges at which an arrow might be deflected.

W H Over Museum

Chief Little Bear of the Cheyennes

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Seattle Public Library

With two arrows in the left hand and one clutched between the teeth, this Plains Indian only misses striking the classic attack pose by not having strung the arrow on the bow.

Other factors, however, enter into the equation. Early smoothbore muskets had a restricted range: their accuracy was limited to about sixty yards, less than some modern .22 caliber rifles The Indian's bow could shoot accurately at over 100 yards and provide harassing, plunging fire at over 250 yards. Later, rifled gun bores straightened bullet trajectories and pushed accuracy beyond 100 yards. The Pennsylvania Rifle, a gun that came into favor about 1750, shot effectively as far as 150 yards.

Another handicap of the early firearms was their rate of fire. It took twenty-six steps to fire a flintlock, but an expert could get off five shots a minute. The complicated process also averaged a thirty-three percent misfire rate. The percussion cap (a small cap fitting on a nipple) replacing the cumbersome flint-clasping hammer, striker arm, and powder pan proved a major enhancement, but loading was still slow.

The big breakthrough in firearms development came with the self-contained cartridge. That innovation, encasing propellant, ignition, and projectile in a metal hull, enabled inventors to take the loading procedure out of fumbling human hands and place it in the more reliable steel clutches of the gun itself. That fostered the advent of the repeating rifle.

The first repeating rifles to gain widespread popularity throughout the American West were self-cocking lever-actions. They utilized a tubular magazine placing the cartridges in line, end to end. Since it was easier to design such an action around a shorter cartridge, most of the famous early designs, Henry and Winchester for example, used hand-

The white man's firearms were not easy to master, even for those who had grown up with the weapons' evolving technology. Indians had even more problems with them. Guns are basically tools, and in their more refined states, such as the repeater, machines. Tools and machines will not perform correctly if they are improperly used.

gun ammunition. While gunmakers argued that the feature simplified ammunition logistics for owners of sidearms and long guns that shot the same round, it reduced range and power substantially.

At the end of the Civil War the US Army, facing the need for rearmament to incorporate new advances, opted for a single shot. The rifle chosen was the "trapdoor" Springfield. The choice was made to enable the use of a more powerful cartridge, the .45-70. The Springfield came in two models, a rifle for the infantry and a carbine for the cavalry. The selection of a single-shot weapon meant a bow-equipped warrior retained a decisive advantage in rate of fire.

Although firearms were improved mechanically, one element in the white man's system remained unchanged. The propellant, although upgraded over time, remained basically a slow-burning mixture called black powder. Its slow rate of combustion left behind residues, and the powerful primers needed to ignite it developed corrosive salts. Such residues eat into good steel like acid into butter.

Modern replica shooters know how dirty black powder is. Large caliber revolvers must often be stripped down for cleaning after no more than two or three cylinders of shooting. Sometimes

the residue deposit is so heavy it impedes the cylinder's rotation. With the adoption of metal cartridges, breechloaders and repeaters no longer came with a ramrod which could double as a cleaning rod.

The wide-open spaces of the West made the Indian feel the need for a gun to remain competitive. Some heavy, long-range rifles like the big .50 caliber Sharps gained great reputations for distant accuracy. Indians shunned such guns for the flashier, rapid firing repeaters. In the Second Battle of Adobe Walls in 1874, Billy Dixon, a buffalo hunter, supposedly made his famous mile-long shot knocking an Indian from his horse with a Sharps. The distance is said actually to have measured 1,538 yards, about 200 yards short of a mile. On the other side, one Indian in Dull Knife's band during the Cheyennes' northward break for freedom in 1878 was reported to have shot many cavalrymen squarely in the mouth, the ultimate editorial comment.

In spite of those examples there were not as many Deadeye Dicks in the Old West as Hollywood would have us believe. Poor marksmanship due to the limitations of inadequate ammunition supplies or target practice was a common complaint among cavalry leaders of the Indian Wars era. Even with practice the army's .45-70 round wasn't exactly the proverbial frozen rope. It had an eight-foot drop at 300 yards.

THE WHITE MAN's firearms were not easy to master, even for those who had grown up with the weapons' evolving technology. Indians had even more problems with them. Guns are basically tools, and in their more refined states, such as the repeater, machines. Tools and machines will not perform correctly if they are improperly used.

One of the Indians' biggest shortcomings with firearms was in not using them straightforwardly. They often modified their guns cosmetically at the expense of function. Feathers were a favorite ornament. They dangled from gun butts and flapped from muzzles. Finding the target through a flutter of feathers blowing in a brisk prairie breeze must have been an interesting challenge. Brass studs driven into cheekpieces often made recoil bothersome if not painful. Even so intelligent a leader as Crazy Horse carried a Winchester with a brass-studded stock. Indians frequently altered gun sights and sometimes even removed them. A Colt Peacemaker belonging to canny old Geronimo had its front sight blade filed off so he could carry it more comfortably in his waistband. Many historical arms collections have examples of crudely sawn-off rifles, their shortened, sightless barrels lashed with rawhide to mutilated stocks.

Indians had the same ammunition and marksmanship problems as the army. Cartridges, the very development that had advanced gun technology, proved costly, and Indians, particularly later in the conflict, had little to trade that white men wanted. Long-standing, deeply felt hatreds often precluded barter. Soon after Captain William J. Fetterman arrived at Fort Phil Kearny in 1866, upwards of twenty Indians fired on him and four other officers not far from the stockade. The officers were so startled that the Indians had time for a second volley. Both fusillades missed

National Archives

Indian army scout using officer's hat to lure out Modoc snipers.

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everything completely, even from a distance later measured at fifty paces and from ample gun rests among the fallen timber.

Primer salts and powder residue can begin pitting a barrel the day after firing. Even those who fully understand the workings of firearms tend to neglect them from time to time, and in the old West the exigencies of the situation might preclude chances for cleaning and maintenance. A moderate amount of pitting will not dramatically affect accuracy. But once pitting has started, it will, if ignored, deteriorate swiftly into real damage.

Because of the functions of the parts, tolerances on metal-to-metal fit are close on firearms. Any degree of fouling can render many firearms useless. At the end of the 1873 Modoc War in the northern California lava beds, caches of ruined Indian rifles were found. They had been destroyed by efforts to hammer clogged actions closed with rocks.

Given the need to settle a new nation and fight with the French, British, Mexicans, and themselves, it was some time before white armies could finally join in battle with the Indian for control of the continent west of the Mississippi. By then the Indian was already half defeated by his fascination with a weapon he did not understand. He did not know how to clean or maintain it; his attempts at repairs brutalized and destroyed the weapons; his aesthetic decorations prohibited accurate aiming; and he had to rely on his enemies for supplies.

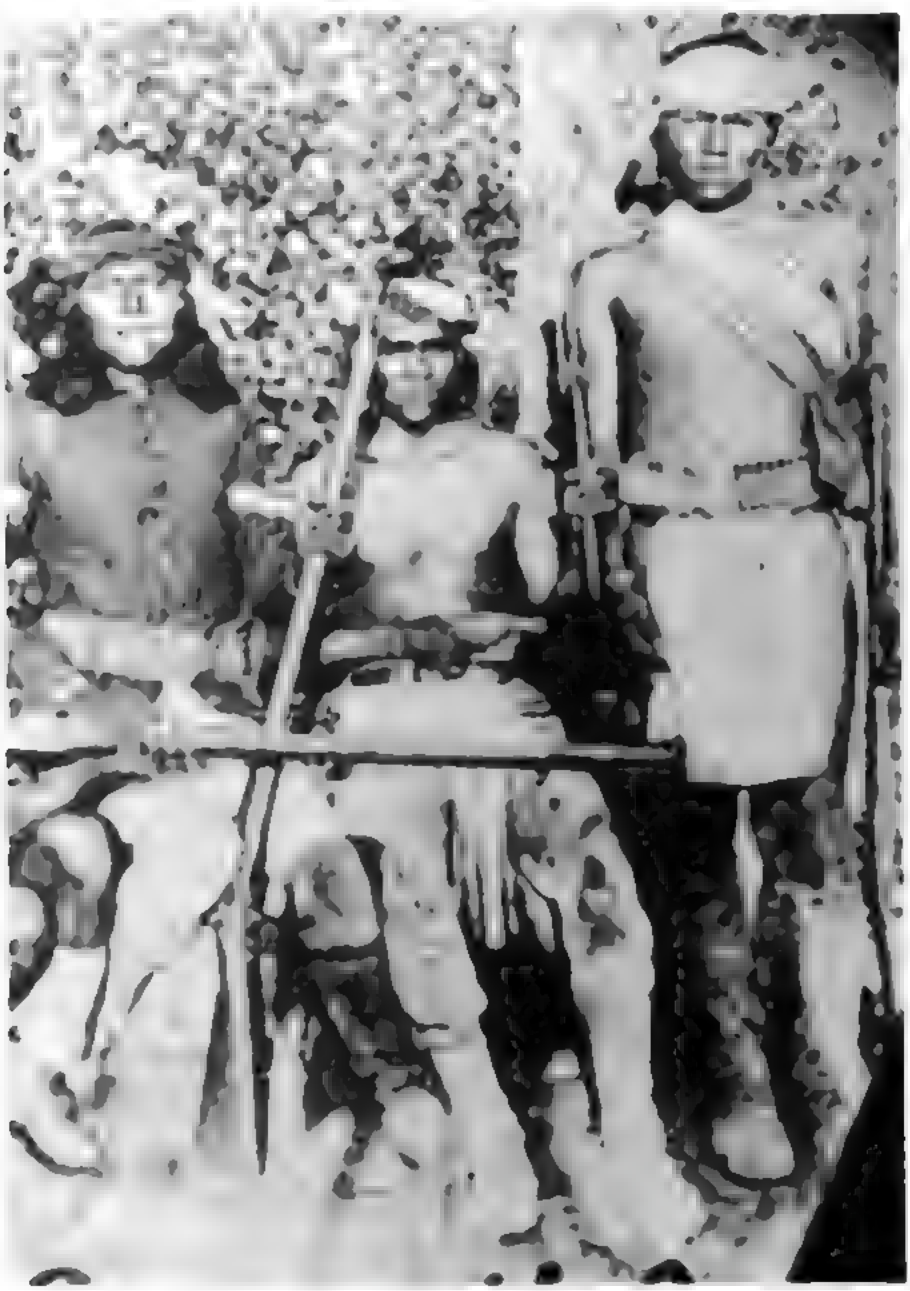
The tribes fought with a motley assortment of weapons that led to individual rather than unified action. Indians loved the flash and excitement of the white man's firearms, but they were not absolutely committed to them—at least not enough to learn how to maintain and use them properly, and certainly not enough to abandon bow and lance, which they used in their victory over Custer on the Little Bighorn.

In every major battle the Indians won, they closed with their enemies in a style of fighting perfectly suited to their traditions and culture. That style was the logical development of the armament Indians made from materials at hand. In the end the Indians rejected their native arsenal for the false promise of the firearm's flash.

In every major battle the Indians won, they closed with their enemies in a style of fighting perfectly suited to their traditions and culture. That style was the logical development of the impressive and effective armament Indians made skillfully from materials at hand. In the end the Indians rejected their native arsenal for the false promise of the firearm's flash.

In hard truth the horse and buffalo economy drew the Indian onto the Plains in the path of the white man's migratory routes. That economy opened the way for the white man's final solution to the Indian problem: starvation by deprivation and the near extinction of the buffalo. Yet one must wonder if a different, more honorable peace might not have been won had the Indians not succumbed to the gun's allure and remained true to themselves and their culture.

But the Indians were fascinated by everything in the European culture, most of all by the gun. It was irresistible. In the end it changed their cultures so that, for the Blackfeet, the expression for an honor of war was *namachkani*, meaning "a gun taken."



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The army met with success only after using Apaches to hunt Apaches.

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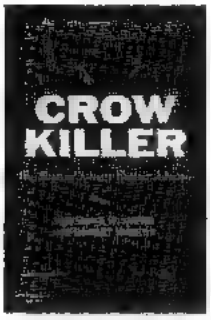

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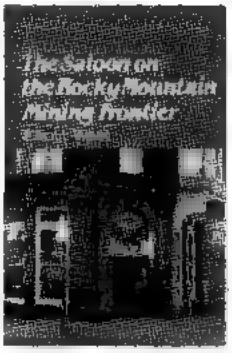

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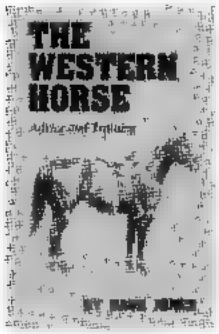

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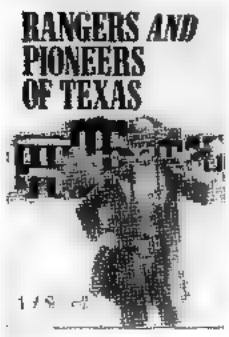

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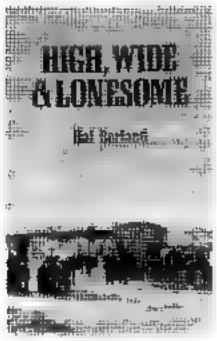

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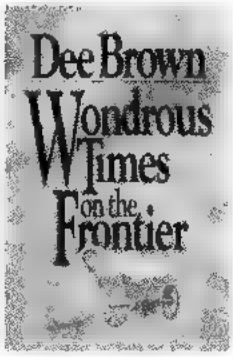

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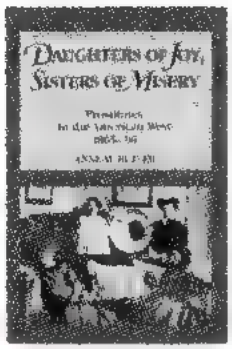

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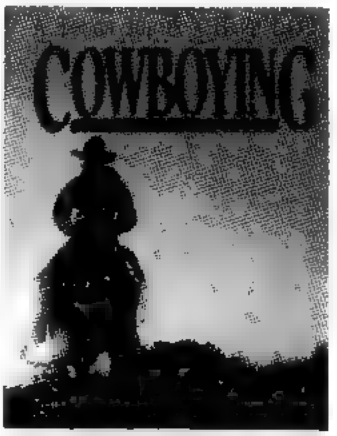

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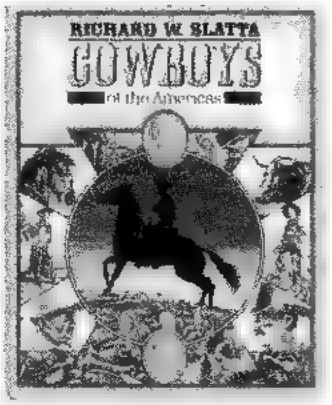

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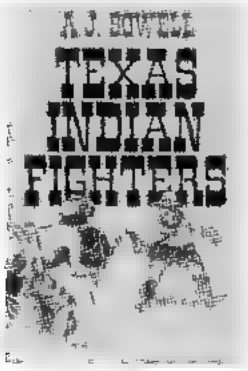

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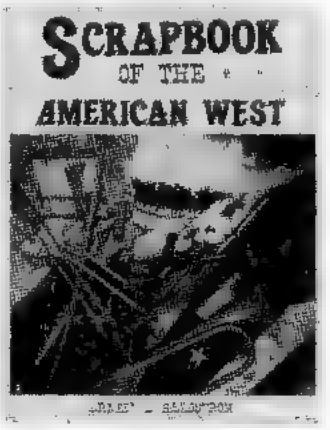

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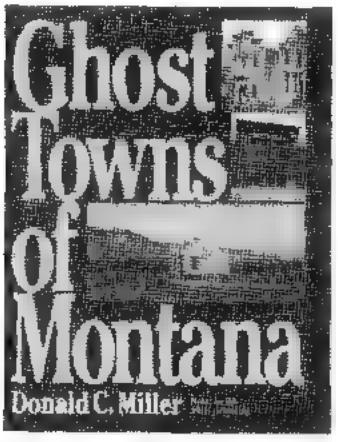

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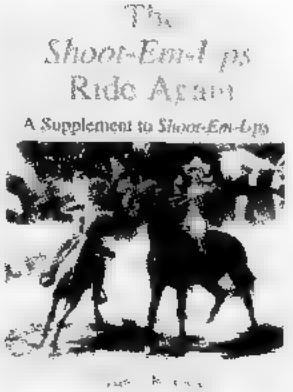

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Sunnyside
Brother Donnelly's Commune

By HALSEY W. MILLER

Samuel Donnelly was born in Scotland in 1853, the son of a Presbyterian minister. His father was large, possessed of a stern demeanor, and had a marked aversion to Catholicism on one hand, and the devil on the other. He was not meek and peace-loving, nor would young Samuel possess those traits.

According to an article in the *Los Angeles Daily Times* of March 27, 1896, "His father was a man of huge stature, stern and sharp, who fought the devil and the Pope to the best of his light. Catholics were his greatest aversion, and the priests of his region dreaded and feared him. When he was on his deathbed, wasted by illness and weak almost beyond arousing, a priest had the fright of his life from the old man. It seems that a woman who was dying had sent for the priest to be shrived. The priest got in the wrong house by mistake, right into the jaws of the dreaded Parson Donnelly himself. He entered the house and the sickroom unannounced. In closing the door behind him it accidentally locked, and he was imprisoned in the room. He approached the bed and began the shriving. The sick man opened his eyes and beheld the hated priest. 'Thou son of the Prince of the Darkness!' he yelled, and sprung up, as weak as he was. The priest fled in terror, and found the door fastened. He knew not how to turn. The only other person in the room was the Donnelly of today, a boy of 12. 'Give me that knife, Samuel,' exclaimed the sick man, pointing to a large butcher-knife near. The boy got the knife, but instead of handing it over, rushed to the door and pried back the lock. He then told the priest to 'git,' or words to that effect. The priest did not delay. The exertion was too much for the patient. He had a relapse and died soon after."

Thus, when the younger Donnelly was twelve, his father died. From then until he was twenty-four, Samuel worked at various businesses to support himself and his mother. Eventually he went to sea as an ordinary seaman. In 1878,

Author's Photo

The flat valley floor of Sunnyside Canyon, just west of the old town

when Samuel was twenty-five, he changed his lifestyle. He was large-framed, physically strong, and had become fond of fighting in barroom brawls. His strength and skill were such that he was able to defeat professional boxers, and he frequently fought three or four opponents in succession. Drinking liquor in large quantities had become another of Donnelly's passions, and he often ordered "drinks for the house"—even if fifty men were present.

Eventually he entered the United States through the port of Los Angeles, where he played jokes on the Salvation Army. Donnelly would attend their meetings for amusement, and if a hymn book had ninety-eight hymns, he would request, "Number ninety-nine, please!" and begin to sing loudly as the rest of the congregation searched in vain for the words and music.

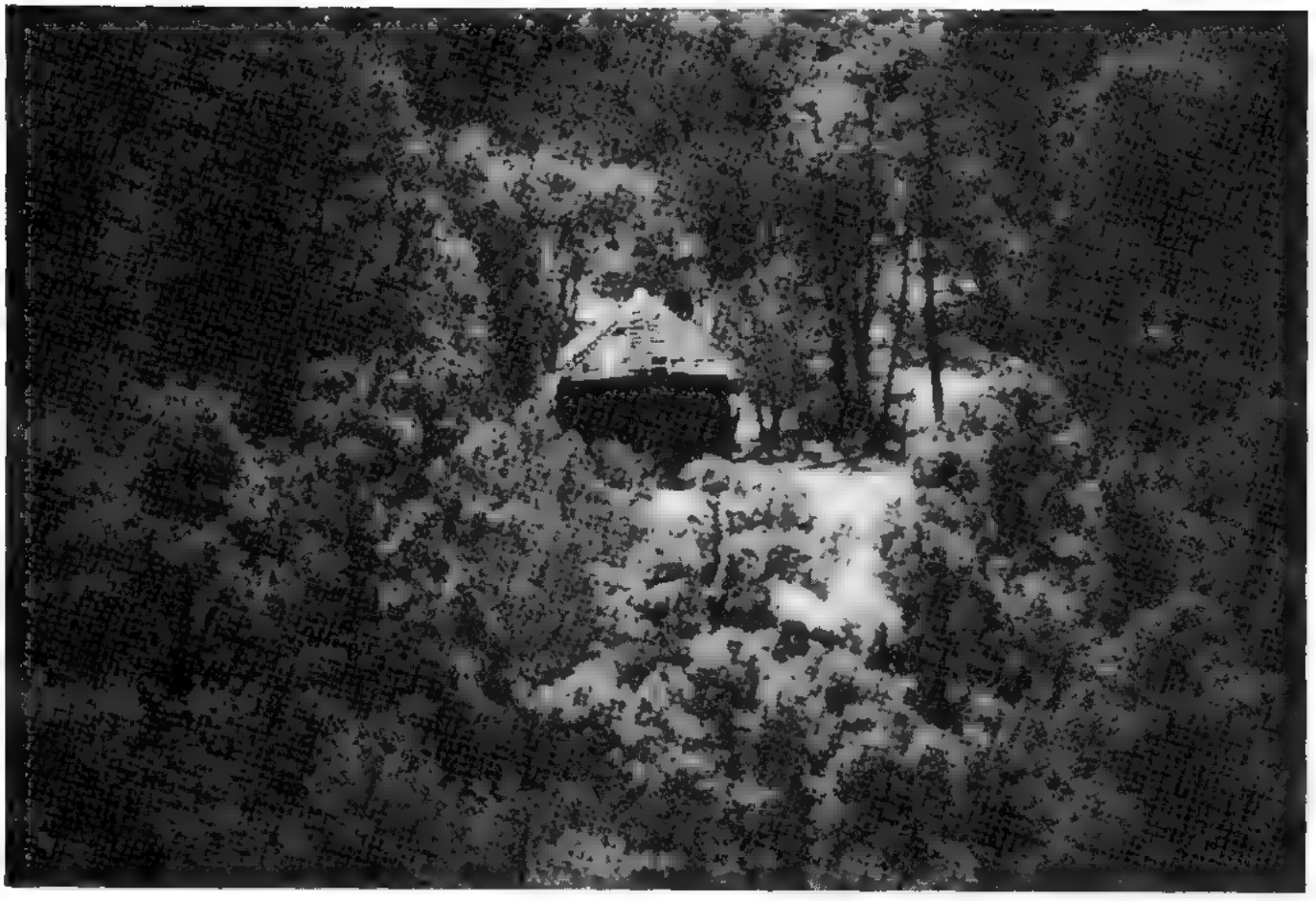
In 1885 at age thirty-two, Donnelly became a sudden religious convert and joined the Presbyterian church. Shortly thereafter he split from that sect over an argument regarding a theological point. He emphasized the "spirit of the Bible," and preached against a literal or word-for-word interpretation of its teachings and creeds. He believed he had been "sent of God for the conversion of his fellow-men." He preached at every opportunity and attempted to become an ordained preacher. Formal churches, not surprisingly, turned him down until he received a summons from a mission in Tombstone, Arizona. Services at the Tombstone Holiness Mission had been frequently disrupted by exuberant miners, and Donnelly was hired for his readiness to fight with his fists as well as his eloquence in the name of religion. He had little difficulty discouraging hecklers. When he arrived in Tombstone he had twenty-five cents in his pocket. Once there he lived frugally, on as little as fifty cents a week, and daily studied the Bible for two hours each morning and for two hours again in the afternoon. He read no other literature, with the exception of newspapers.

Some of his followers claim a revelation led him to acquire the Copper Glance mine. A man named Gates had located and begun to work the Copper Glance on the western slope of the Huachuca Mountains early in the 1880s. Unfortunately, Gates used the wrong process to refine ore from the mine, and the resulting poor monetary return caused him to abandon the project. It sat idle for three years until 1887 when Samuel Donnelly and his partner, Albert Gattrell, claimed it. Gattrell had previously been a saloon keeper and was postmaster of Charleston, Arizona, until that office was discontinued in October 1888.

Together they set up the beginnings of the mining camp of Sunnyside and were joined by their first converts, Ed Langford and his wife, both of whom had attended Brother Donnelly's lengthy sermons in Tombstone. As described by Paul Heermans in the *Los Angeles Daily Times*, "He [Donnelly] continued his studies and gradually evolved his camp of today. His camp was joined first by Langford, the engineer of today, and his family. Langford had been an infidel and was one of the converts of the mission work at Tombstone. Mrs. Langford was a converted Methodist. She had for a long time refused to even hear Donnelly. She

Author's Photo

This concrete foundation west of Sunnyside probably supported a windmill water pump



Author's Photo

The remains of the schoolhouse at Sunnyside.

believed he was engaged in breaking up churches in the attacks made by the man on church schisms. Little by little the numbers increased. Men from the region surrounding were converted by Donnelly's earnest work. A cattleman who had been in the maverick business abandoned his ranch and became an adherent."

Heermans further described his initial impression of Sunnyside in that article. "Hewed into the rocky sides, and coursing abruptly through one of the numerous canons of this range there is a burro trail that at a heavy grade ascends many miles back into the mountains. This trail leads to the Copper Glance camp. A first glimpse of the camp reveals little not seen in the usual birthplaces of precious metals. There is a concentrator, a pond, a machine shop, stables, houses, and tents. Wending from over the mountains is a second burro trail. The trees about are untouched, and in summer give grateful shade. Down the trail patient strings of burros, laden with ore, descend to the concentrators. Men are about, busily employed at the forge or concentrator. The usual saloon and gambling tables accompanying are alone missing. Only for the happy cries of a score of children and more women about the house than is usual, the place is an ordinary mining camp to all appearances."

Laura Nye ultimately became a member of Donnelly's community. She was born in Boswell, Indiana, November 16, 1872, and moved with her family, the O'Harras, to Trego County in Kansas in 1877, where they homesteaded. In her own words, "My joining the [Sunnyside] colony was a mere chance. I lived in Kansas, but had been visiting my aunt in Los Angeles, and we were both on our way back to Kansas when we stopped off to visit some of her friends in the colony. And here I stayed. I was married here and my husband was a wonderful Christian."

In 1935 Mrs. Nye described life at Sunnyside to Mrs. George F. Kitt of the Arizona Historical Society. "I think the greatest number gathered together at one time was about 50. We had a school with 24 pupils. We lived in community fashion. The men worked the mine. What money came from it was used for the whole community. The women ran the community kitchen, where we cooked, ate, washed, etc.—at times the washing was enormous. We had no regular schedule but usually teamed up and sometimes one group would cook or wash for one or several days.

"No one woman was in charge," Mrs. Nye continued. "We just agreed among ourselves, after talking things over. Mrs. Langtree (?) usually did the ordering after we had made suggestions as to what was needed.

"Our provisions were packed in from Fairbank or Tombstone. Though there was a wagon road around the mountains, about where the present C.C.C. road now runs, most of our supplies were packed over the Huachuca Mountains by way of Garden Canyon. Of course the piano we had to bring around.

"Each family had its own cabin in which to live—aside from the cooking—and raise their family," said Mrs. Nye.

"The woman who was best fitted for teaching taught school and only helped with other things as she saw fit. Lillian Crawford played the piano beautifully and a young fellow from New York who came out for tuberculosis, played the violin. These two gave music lessons and they, with one or two others, used to provide music for us to sing and we had many happy evenings spent in this way," she said.

Paul Heermans described a camp of about eighty people, half of whom were men and the rest equally divided between women and children. He described a "great happy family" that lived on the proceeds from the mine, which he judged to be $3,000 per month, and said expenditures for all those living there were $2,000 to $3,000 per year.

"The Copper Glance is a rich property, as may be judged from the expenditures made there," said Heermans. He described the lode as almost vertical and accessed by tunnels at six levels. The vein was clearly defined and varied from one to eight feet in width. The community shipped about a carload of ore a month, and Heermans said the last carload shipped before his visit included six to seven tons of shipping ore, and the rest concentrates. It was comprised of gold, silver, and copper, and brought about $3,000. Heermans said that, while the mine was well developed, a great deal of ore was still to be mined. "A conservative estimate made of that 'in sight' is $60,000, while no limit to its actual extent is visible. The expectation of the camp is that in the two properties they have millions."

In 1951 Eldred Wilson listed the total silver production of the Hartford Mining District (the Huachuca Mountains) as being less than one million troy ounces. The same district produced less than 10,000 tons of copper, and only a few hundred ounces of gold prior to 1970. Although the Copper Glance mine contained small but rich pockets of ore, its potential production was nowhere near the limits estimated by the Donnellites of Sunnyside.

Money not needed to hire miners or support the commune went to charitable ventures. Donnelly told Heermans, "The aim of my life is to do God's will with wisdom; the amelioration and good of my fellow-man; to relieve his sufferings and aid him promptly when he is needy, but not to pander to his covetousness." Heermans recounted that Donnelly once visited the University of Arizona at Tucson, and found needy students from his own county of Cochise. Discovering that they were working their way through school and earning $8.50 per month but had expenses of $13 per month, Donnelly donated to them an allowance of $20 per month.

In spite of the charitable nature of his commune, Brother Donnelly kept moochers at bay. A miner who had been prospecting in the Huachucas entered Sunnyside one morning and asked if he could have his drill bits sharpened at the machine shop. Paul Heermans quoted the conversation as follows:

"'Certainly,' was the reply. 'Go right up to the shop.'

"'And I want some other things,' continued the fellow.

Money not needed to hire miners or support the commune went to charity. Donnelly told Heermans, "The aim of my life is to do God's will with wisdom; the amelioration and good of my fellow-man; to relieve his sufferings and aid him promptly when he is needy, but not to pander to his covetousness."

"'Yes! What?'

"'Well, some overalls, some giant powder, beans and bacon.'

"'All right, take them. And say, my friend, why didn't you send to Fairbanks for them? You know we don't sell anything here?'

"'Well, I couldn't tell when the team was going,' was the best excuse the miner could make. He got all he wanted." If he showed up again the Donnellites were prepared to give him a warm and uncomfortable welcome.

ANOTHER prospector wandered into Sunnyside, was welcomed, entertained with music, fed, and lectured. Paul Heermans wrote: "The next morning the prospector stated that he would like to purchase provisions to go out in the hills again. His needs were asked. He needed overalls, and beef, and beans, and tobacco. His burro was well packed, and the amount of the bill was asked. 'My friend,' said his host of the night before, 'at this camp we never sell anything but ore. Take it; you are entirely welcome. We aim to do good to our fellow-men; and that is our only desire.'

"'Well, I'll be damned!' said the miner.

"'What's that?' thundered Donnelly.

"'Sir, in this camp such language is not tolerated. Leave at once! Instantly!'

"As the prospector, on departing, said in his burro's ear, 'This camp is a blamed queer outfit.'"

Donnelly possessed a strong sense of fair play, as displayed in the Herndon affair, an attempt to frame an innocent man. In 1878 John W. Hillman of Topeka, Kansas, was found murdered in southern Missouri. His insurance company refused to pay any benefits, claiming that Hillman had killed a double and was still alive. The case went to court, where it languished for years, until a reward of $40,000 was offered for John W. Hillman, dead or alive. He became the target of every bounty hunter in the west. Shortly thereafter some of the searchers reached Sunnyside. Heermans related that three men, apparently prospectors, arrived in camp in early November 1894, looking for work. Donnelly had no work but packed their animals with beef and other supplies. A man named Herndon refused to accept the goods unless he was allowed to work for them.

"Finally he was told that the three could work five days apiece at $3 a day, thus settling the value of the cargo, $45," wrote Heermans. "On these terms the men went to work. When the time was up two of them were discharged, their work not being satisfactory. Herndon, however, had proved industrious and willing, and he was retained."

On Thanksgiving day everyone in camp, including the two discharged men, met at Donnelly's house for dinner. Shortly before dinner four officers arrived and told Donnelly they were after a man in camp thought to be a murderer and an outlaw.

"'Well,' was the reply, 'you can wait long enough to take Thanksgiving dinner,'" wrote Heermans. "'He is a dangerous man,' they said, but they tarried. Without appearing to, Donnelly watched them, keen as a hawk. 'That's him,' said one, indicating Herndon.

"'No,' was the reply; 'He is too young.' After dinner, Mr. Donnelly said:

"'Mr. Herndon, these gentlemen are here to arrest you.'

"'I don't know what I have done to be arrested, but I'll go along,' said Herndon."

Donnelly noted that Herndon did not act like a dangerous and desperate man and realized that no warrant had been served on the man. He gathered a posse from the camp, hurried down the canyon, and overtook the officers and prisoner.

"'Gentlemen,' said Donnelly, 'you have taken this man without a warrant. I do not believe he is guilty, and no man shall leave here by such proceedings without his consent. Mr. Herndon,' he continued, 'you are going without any proceedings of law, and you can prob-

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ably establish your innocence. Do you choose to go with these men?"

Heermans wrote that, "Herndon decided to go with them, and his friends returned to the camp. That night suspicious circumstances arose. The driver of the vehicle that took the officers out was told that if he kept his own counsel of whatever might happen, it would be worth $1000 to him. He failed to acquiesce. 'I don't want your blood money,' he said.

"Another queer action was that while they started to take Herndon to one railroad point, Fairbanks [sic], they, instead, took him to another, Huachuca Siding.

"This all got to Donnelly's ears. He at once dispatched two men to Tombstone, to get out a writ of habeas corpus to secure the release of Herndon. When he got to Tombstone, he found Herndon in worse clutches than supposed heretofore. The Supreme Court had ordered in the Hillman case that the insurance money be paid to Mrs. Hillman, on or before the 1st of January, and it was now within one month of that time. The insurance company's case hung on the thread of finding Hillman. Suspicions were expressed, and had the merit of probability, that the insurance case being very desperate, the 'officers' would find a man who looked enough like Hillman, kill him and say that he had been shot while attempting escape. The corpse would then be labeled 'Exhibit A,' and he would be where he could tell no tales.

"Herndon was decidedly in the talons of vultures. The story of his being a desperate man looked ugly. So did the offer to the driver. As he was only 34 years old, which would have made him a youth of 16 when Hillman was killed, the flimsiness of it all became more and more apparent.

"The 'officers' were stopped, and Herndon was brought to Tombstone for the hearing of his case. To give time to get his evidence, the case was postponed till the following Monday, and again till Friday.

"Meanwhile, Donnelly was wiring right and left to Herndon's relatives, who lived in the Indian Territory, a statement of Herndon's plight, and telling them to come, and if they did not have the money he would furnish it. The telegrams alone cost $27. The retainer of a lawyer was $100. To make a long story short, the most determined opposition was made to the habeas corpus proceedings, and the reward-hunters declared they would take Herndon bodily if he was acquitted. Herndon was released, Donnelly's expenses on his behalf were about $600."

Author's Photo

A sign posted by new owners advises trespassers to "keep out" of Sunnyside.

Production of ore from the Copper Glance mine became irregular in the mid-1890s and to insure further income a sawmill was erected and began operation in December 1894. Some of the lumber was used by the Donnellites and the rest was sold to mines near Washington Camp located a few miles west in the Patagonia Mountains. A tragedy occurred when the Copper Glance mine unexpectedly filled with water—literally overnight—a short time later. Pumps could not remove the water, and topographically lower tunnels driven to drain the water missed their mark.

The miners then tried to locate an extension of the Copper Glance vein three miles to the southeast, but met with little success. The sawmill became the major economic support for the community after 1898.

Brother Donnelly died on April 14, 1901, after a five-month illness, the last four months of which confined him to bed. The *Florence Tribune* reported on April 21, 1901, he died at Fairbank, Arizona, and was "Buried on the heights where he had so long made his home. Body kept in state for over a week to give time for friends to attend funeral. Many were there coming from different localities."

A former forest ranger, R.J. Rogers, told Mrs. Kitt of the Arizona Historical Society, "The colony was in existence when I came to Canelo in 1904. Donnelly was dead and a fine old gentleman [Albert Gattrell] was leader. The colony was then down at Sunnyville [sic] where they were cutting lumber. Gattrell made application for title to 160 acres as a homestead. I as forest ranger made an adverse report on the amount of land capable of cultivation so the homestead was made for less."

Gattrell remained in charge until the woodcutters, miners, and their families moved away. By 1907 only one man, Cyrus Cooper, remained—alone—at Sunnyside. The sawmill had become uneconomical, as wood brought in by the Benson-to-Nogales railroad was sold at Washington Camp for a lower price than the Sunnysiders could match.

In 1912 the Gattrells returned to Sunnyside and filed homestead claims. They were followed by other families, and on July 16, 1914, a post office was opened with Mrs. Lucy Langford serving as postmistress. The revived commune, now an agricultural enterprise, housed about twenty people, and it flourished. After Albert Gattrell died in 1918 at age seventy-four, his wife, Diana Eley Gattrell, ran the communal farm and ranch until her death in 1925, when Laura Nye became the leader. The post office was closed on March 15, 1935, as the population again declined. Mrs. Nye moved away in 1941, and the town was abandoned. Attempts made by John McIntyre during the 1960s to revive the settlement were unsuccessful, and the buildings remained empty.

Now the town site is owned by a private party and is posted with a large number of "no trespassing" signs.

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FORT OWEN
Trading Post in the Bitterroot

By JAMIE CUSTER PARMENTER

Fort Owen, southwest side. Hints of the eventual crumbling of the west bastion can be seen in this photo of 1887.

As the West lured more home-seekers, the fort became the center of trade and agriculture—a community around which families and visitors lived, worked, and gathered for social interaction. Fort Owen was the nucleus of the first permanent white settlement in Montana, the city of Stevensville.

Bloody confrontations between the white armies and Indians, at such places as the Little Bighorn and the Big Hole, have given Montana a deadly legacy. Yet nestled between the towering peaks of the Bitterroot Range and the Sapphire Mountains in western Montana, a plush valley known as the Bitterroot holds the evidence of a brighter, happier heritage. In the valley, described in the early days as being "about twelve miles wide, very fertile and watered by cool, sparkling brooks," stands a monument to a place of lesser-known history. That monument is Fort Owen, a place where Indians and whites lived as neighbors and friends in peace and prosperity.

Mining brought many of the first white men into the Northwest. The lure of gold, silver, and sapphires kept miners in gold camps where they subsisted on little more than wild meat. The nearest source of supplies was Salt Lake City, some four hundred miles south over almost impassable mountain trails.

In November 1850 Major John Owen entered the Bitterroot Valley, then part of the vast Oregon country. Having served as sutler to the army, Owen was no stranger to the West. He came now as an independent businessman with a unique vision. His arrival in the valley proved quite timely. Father Joset of the Catholic Church, serving among the local Indians, was preparing to leave the valley and offered the church improvements to the major. On November 5, Owen paid $250 for the St. Mary's Mission. The bill of sale, transacted between John Owen and Father Joset, was the first legal document recorded in what is now Montana.

Major Owen relocated to higher ground slightly north of the original mission. He took the precaution of enclosing his new establishment with a palisade of cottonwood logs as bands of Blackfeet made occasional raids in the area. He renamed his establishment "Fort Owen." Fort Owen was never a military installation. Many trading posts in the lonely reaches of the Trans-

Author's Collection

Mississippi West were called "forts."

As a business venture the fort was not an immediate success. A variety of items were available from the storeroom, providing the miners with supplies they desperately needed, but ranching and farming were undertaken while trade became more established. Until 1852 nearly all trade was with the Indians and the few mountain men who wintered in the Bitterroot.

As the West lured more home-seekers, the fort became the center of trade and agriculture—a community around which families and visitors lived, worked, and gathered for social interaction. Fort Owen was the nucleus of the first permanent white settlement in Montana, the city of Stevensville.

By 1853 Fort Owen was becoming a popular and much appreciated oasis of civilization in a wilderness that stretched hundreds of miles in all directions. The newly formed Washington Territory now encompassed the Bitterroot Valley, and the fort entertained a spectrum of guests including trappers, traders, Indians, soldiers, missionaries, and politicians.

Fort visitors included John Owen's brother, Frank, an explorer whose name is on the original contract of sale of the mission property. Caleb Irvine, a former member of the Mounted Rifles to whom Owen had been sutler, also came to live at the fort for a time. Irvine went on to be successful in Montana politics. Captain Richard Grant, chief trader for the Hudson's Bay Company, became an independent trapper and visited the fort often. Also of the Hudson's Bay Company was Angus McDonald, a Scottish fur trader and frequent guest at the fort. Father Antoney Ravalli, as well as other Catholic missionaries entering the valley, stayed at the fort on many occasions. Army General Thomas F. Meagher and his wife were visitors as well as many other military officials. Fort Owen was a favorite stay for all traveling army personnel.

But life at Fort Owen was not always tranquil. In 1853 Blackfeet Indians killed and scalped fort employee John F. Dobson within sight of the fort walls. Though that was the only violent act

Author's Photo

The entrance to the guest room in the east barracks.

Both Author's Collection

Inside the fort at the north end facing south, about 1887. The heavy-set man in center is Washington J. McCormick.

The presence of so many troops in the area further encouraged use of an old emigrant road stretching through the Bitterroot. The trickle of travelers became a flood when gold was discovered in California. One traveler described the trail as "a noble highway smooth as a barn floor swept by the winds."

recorded at the fort, Indian troubles that year became so widespread that it was temporarily abandoned. While journeying to the safety of the Pacific Coast, Owen and his party came upon a government survey team bound for the Bitterroot and decided to return in their company. Captain C.P. Higgins, a founder of Missoula, Montana, was a member of that expedition, one of several probing the West under orders from Secretary of War Jefferson Davis to find the most practical route for a railroad to the West Coast.

During the same period the newly appointed governor of Washington Territory, Isaac I. Stevens, arrived in the Bitterroot on a tour to acquaint himself with the inhabitants and the domain he was to govern. Governor Stevens was Owen's guest at the fort.

In the fall of the same year Lieutenant John Mullan arrived with orders to explore the region and plot a military road from Fort Walla Walla on the Columbia River to Fort Benton on the Missouri. That road would be the shortest overland crossing of the United States.

The presence of the government parties in 1853 and 1854 brought increased business to the fort, and in 1855 a treaty council held at the behest of Governor Stevens resulted in a small boom period as both whites and Indians took advantage of the opporunity to trade. During that time Major Owen became Indian agent for the government and Fort Owen became the agency headquarters.

Victor, the head chief of the Flathead Indians, worked closely with Major Owen during his six years as Indian agent. The chief spent much time at the fort and found it to be comfortable and gracious.

The gates of Fort Owen separated a vast and seemingly hostile wilderness from a more civilized world of business affairs and daily routines, with the comfort of enclosed buildings, fireplaces, and beds. Major Owen was a gracious and appreciative host who enjoyed extending the hospitality of his fort to visitors passing through the region. The accommodations, no doubt, seemed luxurious to weary travelers just off the dangerous trails.

The presence of so many troops in the area further encouraged use of an old emigrant road stretching through the Bitterroot. The trickle of travelers became a flood when gold was discovered in California. One traveler described the trail as "a noble highway smooth as a barn floor swept by the winds. Not a blade of grass could shoot on it on account of the continual passing." The busines of wintering horses became profitable at the fort as footsore and weary horses were traded two for one. Some of the animals procured from the emigrants were well bred and greatly improved the northwest stock.

Between 1857 and 1860 the fort changed drastically in appearance. The original timber palisade gave way to walls of over 100,000 adobe bricks, three and one-half feet thick, twelve feet high, and smoothed on the tops "so a

Opposite: The east barracks and reconstructed roof over the excavated root cellar.
True West

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The west barracks, probably at the turn of the century. The west bastion has fallen, along with most of the outer walls. By 1920 only the east barracks still stood.

man could run around them." Making "adobes" from local material provided work for many newcomers. Work was paid for in goods from the storehouse. Louis Griminzau, a vagabond, became the fort's champion adobe maker. He could make 500 to 700 bricks a day while most men could manage only 100. Throughout construction, rainfall thwarted adobe making efforts and inspired such comments as, "I dreamed that my adobes were nothing but a puddle of mud." However, Montana's climate is not kind to adobe, and frequent patching was necessary, particularly after spring thaws.

Barracks were built along the west and east walls. Two-story bastions guarded the southern approaches to the fort and overlooked the main gates. Another entrance, smaller but as strong as the south gate, was set into the north wall. The fort root cellar was completed in the autumn of 1860 during the last phase of the adobe construction.

IN THE east barracks were Major Owen's and his Indian wife's quarters, his office with a library filling the space of two walls, a guest room, and a dormitory. The west barracks housed the kitchen and mess hall, the trade room, and the workshop. The bastions, though equipped with loopholes for rifles, never saw battle. Instead they were used as a granary, storehouse for drugs and other medical supplies, and a doctor's office. At times they even served as a guest room. The northwest corner sheltered a small horse enclosure and blacksmith shop. This shop may have also been used as a schoolroom, for which Major Owen had hired someone to teach local Indian children. Tucked between the southeast bastion and the east barracks was the root cellar. Almost centered between the two barracks were the well and well house. One other necessary structure—the outhouse—

Author's Photo

Author's Collection

The west bastion of Fort Owen, probably about 1890. The timber fence along the front (south) side was put up for agricultural purposes after the original adobe wall had fallen.

Trail-worn visitors arriving at Fort Owen in the 1860s found snug bunks in the dormitory. Visitors of official status luxuriated in a bed in a private room complete with a fireplace, shelves, and a closet. After an elegant meal Owen's guests could join him for a pipe in his office, and "sundry nips" of brandy.

completed the development. A howitzer was obtained from Fort Benton, though its use was limited to salutes marking the Fourth of July, the New Year, and the arrival of distinguished visitors. In 1866 a two-story icehouse loomed between the north wall and the east barracks.

Trail-worn visitors arriving at Fort Owen in the 1860s found snug bunks in the dormitory. Visitors of official status luxuriated in a bed in a private room complete with a fireplace, shelves, and a closet. After an elegant meal (which, after 1866, would have been cooked on a stove instead of the fort's open hearth) Owen's guests could join him for a pipe in his office, and "sundry nips" of brandy.

The years between 1858 and 1860 were probably the most financially productive for the fort. Lieutenant Mullan's crew of military and civilian workers brought considerable business to the trade room, as did the increasing number of settlers. Owen could anticipate future prosperity with the fort as he surveyed its acres of productive farmlands, the irrigation system in operation, new orchards showing growth, and livestock in good order. The 1860 census valued the real estate of Fort Owen at $10,000.

Late in 1860 the Washington Territory legislature divided Spokane County and created Missoula County with its seat at or near the trading post at Hell's Gate Ronde on the Mullan Road. Fort Owen was made one of the three polling places in the first county election of 1861, in which the combined vote totaled seventy-four.

In 1862 Owen entered into a contract with George M. Windes, a millwright and nephew to Jefferson Davis. Windes was to construct "in the most workman like and substantial manner" a mill twenty-two feet by thirty-two feet and three stories high, as well as a fourteen-foot overshot wheel, granaries, flume, and appurtenances for the entire operation. The contract was dated 1863 and was to be fulfilled in "as expeditious" a manner as possible, but the mill was not completed until September 1865.

The construction of the grist mill was of great interest to the community. A report by "X" Beidler in the Helena *Herald* said that he had seen 10,000 pounds of flour from the major's mill being packed for shipment to the Kootenai miners, and that "similar shipments were frequent to other parts of the country." The profits from the gristmill quickly became the primary source of income to the fort.

MISSOULA COUNTY became part of Idaho Territory in 1863, then part of Montana Territory in 1864. The first legislature of the fledgling territory met in Bannock in 1865 and confirmed Hell's Gate as the county seat.

While Mullan Road benefited Fort Owen's economy, it proved a more convenient route to the trading post at Hell's Gate, helping that settlement to retain its position as county seat. The situation hurt Owen's hope that his fort would continue to be the hub of activities in western Montana. While legislation credited Fort Owen's importance, and the Historical Society of Montana

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honored Major Owen, the fort's heyday was past.

Meanwhile, the little community of Hell's Gate was changing from a ripsnorting handful of men living in a cluster of cabins to an aggressive commercial center established around mills, stores, and saloons. It would form the roots of today's Missoula. The area formerly nurtured by Fort Owen found a ready market at Hell's Gate, and the trade room at Fort Owen drew fewer and fewer customers.

In 1868 John Owen's wife, Nancy, died, and his heart was no longer in the fort. The mill operated as before, but Owen was unable to cope rationally with his problems. Notes went unpaid, and his property was mortgaged and threatened with sheriff's sale on more than one occasion.

At a sheriff's sale on December 30, 1872, the fort sold for $4,100 to Washington J. McCormick, to whom John Owen was deeply in debt. McCormick, a close friend of Owen, was no stranger to the fort, as he had visited there many times. The fort was but one of his many interests, however, and he made no attempt to restore its former style.

McCormick used the old ledger for the grist mill accounts until 1881. Of the old establishment, the Fort Owen farm and mill were all that remained active. The trade room was no more, for Stevensville supported a variety of commercial establishments by 1875.

The stout south wall still stood, but the walls on either side were in ruins by 1877 when the Nez Percé, under Chief Joseph, appeared in the valley seeking peaceful passage to Canada. The panicked citizens of Stevensville hastily shored up the walls of the crumbling Fort Owen with timbers and banks of sod, making a mockery of the cobblestone entry that had known the footfall of Indians, trappers, trade caravans, missionaries, and soldiers—all peaceful visitors to the fort. No war whoops sounded and no shots were fired to threaten the longtime peace of the fort. Its nervous inhabitants returned to their homes, leaving the old adobe buildings to return to the simple farm residence they had become.

Major Owen died on July 12, 1889. Sometime in 1890 the grist mill, so long a landmark, mysteriously burned to the ground. It was the last remaining operation of the fort. McCormick also died in 1889. His heirs administered the property, used for a variety of agricultural purposes, well into the twentieth century, when they donated the acre of ground upon which the old fort stands to the State of Montana.

For a time the historical importance of Fort Owen was lost. By the 1920s only the east barracks of the original adobe construction remained standing. Not until then was work undertaken to preserve and restore the weather-worn and ill-used remnants of the fort. Archaeological excavations began in 1957, 100 years after the adobe construction had begun. Foundations have been uncovered as well as hundreds of artifacts. Those efforts were rewarded in 1970 when Fort Owen was recognized as a national historic site. The fort has been reenclosed with newly laid boundaries, and reconstruction is planned for the future. It is now a monument to all pioneers, explorers, mountain men, and Indians who visited there.

Author's Photo

The reconstructed boundary of Fort Owen's east bastion.

THE TRUNK MURDER MYSTERY

By R.E. MATHER

The room was dimly lit. Hovering about the chest, ready to peer inside, the captain raised the lid. As he did so, two trousered legs and shoeless feet shot up like a jack-in-the-box, nearly striking the amazed officer on the jaw.

California State Library

Albert McVicar, after death. In the background is the infamous trunk.

If March 24, 1906, had not been a typically warm California day, the murder might have gone undetected. As the agent of the Southern Pacific Railroad closed the Stockton depot that Saturday night, he noticed some abandoned luggage on the platform. The baggageman had ejected the two pieces from the Jackson-bound train because they were unchecked. But after the agent wheeled them inside, such an acrid stench permeated the baggage room that he summoned police to investigate.

Kneeling before the bulging trunk from which the odor emanated, the police captain loosed its knotted rope and unbuckled its straps. The room was dimly lit. Hovering about the chest, ready to peer inside, the captain raised the lid. As he did so, two trousered legs and shoeless feet shot up like a jack-in-the-box, nearly striking the amazed officer on the jaw.

After recovering from the shock, those present pressed closer for a better view. A corpse had been packed in the trunk, they noted, "as neatly as a chicken fills an egg." Since the container was only about three feet by two feet by two feet, and the body appeared to be over six feet tall and nearly two hundred pounds, the packer had first had to squeeze in the torso, then crush down one shoulder and bend the head aside to fit in a corner, and lastly, fold the legs up to meet the side-tilted chin. Tucked in the three remaining corners were pieces of soiled laundry and two well-polished shoes.

As the horrified group gazed down at the well-groomed young man dressed in a fashionable, dark suit; starched, white shirt; dark tie; and black stockings but no shoes, the captain expressed a theory which made the image even more macabre. Since the clothing and the bottom of the trunk were "red with blood," he said, the victim must have been alive when forced inside. Evidently he had died of suffocation.

Contents of the other abandoned bag identified the deceased as Albert McVicar, a timber man at the famed Rawhide Mine, not far from Jamestown. The miner and his wife had spent Friday night in room ninety-seven of the California House at the corner of Stockton's Main and California streets. An expressman remembered having picked up the luggage from that room before he delivered it to the depot. "When I complained about the trunk being so heavy," the expressman told police, Mrs. McVicar "gave me two bits extra."

While hundreds of citizens queued up at the morgue to file past the victim laid out on a slab (and continued to do so even after an autopsy had required decapitation and removal of internal organs), investigators went to work on the case. They soon apprehended Mrs. McVicar at a hotel in Antioch. Her present name was Mrs. Emma LeDoux, the young woman explained, and she was Albert McVicar's ex-wife. District Attorney Charles Norton, an ambitious politician who recognized an opportunity to make a name for himself, hurried to Antioch and personally conducted the interrogation of the suspect. Though Emma insisted she had not killed her ex-husband, Norton announced that he was certain he had found the guilty party.

With headlines of "Victim Placed in Trunk Alive," word of the "sensational trunk mystery" spread faster than a boomtown fire, attracting national and foreign attention. Hoping to avoid curious onlookers, the sheriff announced

that the prisoner would arrive at Stockton on the Santa Fe line but actually dispatched the arrest party and suspect in a baggage car on the Southern Pacific. The moment the group stepped onto the platform where the trunk had been discovered, however, nearly a thousand people waiting to see "the murderess" flocked about them. A crowd of equal size waited at the San Joaquin County jail, making it necessary for the escorts to forge a path and then rush inside.

But the press had gotten their first glimpse of the rather fragile, twenty-nine-year-old prisoner. She wore a long, form-fitting coat; upswept, flower-and-leaf ornamented hat; gloves; and no handcuffs. Struck by her apparent "coolness" and "self-possession," the press dubbed her "the woman with nerves of iron and face of brass." Her eyes, the San Francisco *Chronicle* expounded, "are hard, cold, and merciless as those of a snake." For the deceased, the papers had nothing but praise. Albert McVicar had been "a miner of good reputation . . . well thought of by all." His fellow miners swore that Al was "one of the best workmen" and "could turn his hand at anything." He was "quiet, industrious, took care of his money, and . . . not a drinking man."

Though police had expected a quick confession, the closemouthed suspect maintained that she had "nothing to confess." Readers devoured news that though putting up a brave front, Emma ate little, slept poorly, and had been caught in an "occasional wringing and clenching of the hands" as she took "nervous strides up and down her narrow cell." When authorities asked if she wished to see anyone, she responded, "I want my mother."

A steady stream of leaks flowed from investigators to press. Excited newsboys shouted in the streets that the "Accused Murderess Bought Six Ounces of Cyanide of Potassium," that the search for a reported accomplice named Joe Miller had proven fruitless, that evidently the ex-wife "had acted alone," leaving a glaring trail of clues behind her, and that "public sentiment" against the accused "is a unit."

The day after Emma pleaded "not guilty," bigger news coming out of San Francisco eclipsed her story. On April 6, a massive earthquake rocked the city, setting off a blaze that left hundreds dead. But while front-page articles described starving dog packs "knawing" at "corpses half-buried in the ruins" of San Francisco, back-page items continued to back away at the barrier Emma was trying to keep around the love triangle which had ended in tragedy. The trunk-murderess, investigation revealed, was a native Californian, born in a small cottage high on Pine Ridge in the mountains of Amador County. She was the first child of sixteen-year-old Mary and thirty-nine-year-old Thomas Cole. Evidently the young woman now quietly pacing the Stockton jail cell had come by her taciturnity and stoicism honestly. Like others who lived "back there in the mountains," townspeople observed, the Coles were "stolid folk and reticent," and not apt to show their "distress."

After fathering his eighth child, Thomas Cole had deserted his family. For Mary and her mainstay—eldest child Emma—life became little more than a struggle for shelter, food, and clothing. In desperation, Mary married an elderly widower who lived nearby. His farm lay two miles north of the mining community of Jackson, not far from the renowned Kennedy quartz mine, whose vertical shafts were some of the deepest in the world. Though the Kennedy Mine was very productive, the little farm nestled in the hills beyond was not. In addition, Mary's second husband was described as a "ne'er-do-well" who "only added to her burden." Thus the eight children growing up with a view of a rich mine's giant headframe experienced harsh poverty. When Mary could find work, she hired out as a home nurse, leaving Emma in charge of her younger five sisters and two brothers.

Despite being small and rather frail, Emma was a hardworking girl. Acquaintances remembered that she spoke very little, was of a "mild disposition, never boisterous or forward," yet "sympathetic" to others' problems and "willing at all times to give . . . help to her neighbors." Though newsmen wrote that the twenty-nine-year-old suspect was "scrawny, pointed-chinned, and sallow-complected," in her own community young Emma had been considered a beauty: delicate figure, pale complexion, blue eyes, and thick, dark hair.

From an early age, she was strongly attracted to men, and they to her. Her first love was a boy named Jean LeDoux, whose mother ran a miners' boarding house at nearby Martell's Station. Since childhood disease had left Jean nearly deaf, his mother had not sent him to school. Others mistook his

California State Library

Emma LeDoux, first woman sentenced to hang by the state of California.

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Rawhide's original school, founded in 1875, now serves as a private school

During those domestic trials, Emma began meeting McVicar. The decision facing her was difficult; she must choose between a reclusive husband who could scarcely keep a roof over their heads and a previously abusive husband—and presumably the father of the twins—who now promised to lavish wealth upon her family.

illiteracy as a sign that the boy was "not very bright," but Emma thought otherwise. Then at age fifteen, she had to leave the farm to work in town as a domestic, and the romance came to an end.

At sixteen—the same age her mother had wed—Emma married her second love, a man named Charles Barrett. The couple was ecstatically happy, but their families caused such friction that within a few months the teenage divorcée was back with Mary, helping support the family by dressmaking. Years later she married a middle-aged miner who was suffering from consumption. In hopes of prolonging his life, they moved to Arizona Territory and bought a chicken farm, using egg money to make payments on his $2,000 life insurance policy.

When the ailing miner died in 1902, Emma was for the first time in her life a woman of means. At that point, Albert McVicar entered her life, offering the widow "comfort and sympathy." The expensively attired young man, described as "swarthy as a Latin," spoke of his wealthy family in Wichita, Kansas, of leaving home to become a Wells, Fargo agent in Cripple Creek, Colorado, and of being temporarily out of work. Emma, who was evidently a woman who always needed to be in love, became infatuated with the worldly stranger.

Following their September 1, 1902, marriage, they relocated to Emma's native state. It took McVicar only a few months of high living in San Francisco to squander Emma's entire fortune. During the collapse of their marriage, he beat his wife and also inflicted certain indignities upon her which she chose to conceal. In early 1903, she showed up at Mary's farm, penniless and pregnant. McVicar paid her one visit, but only to inform her that he had divorced her on grounds of desertion. Soon after she gave birth to twin boys, whom she reared on the farm and supported by sewing dresses for the ladies in town.

Her childhood sweetheart, Jean LeDoux, still lived at the family boarding house at Martell's, still endured ridicule as "that ignorant Frenchman," and still loved Emma. Though Jacksonites could not understand why an attractive woman familiar with city life would waste time on a "humdrum sort of fellow" who was "deaf as a post," Emma wrote Jean a series of love letters to be read to him by his brother. She also promised to marry Jean. Just before the ceremony, McVicar appeared at the farm, asking to be forgiven. He had a high-paying job at the Rawhide Mine and wanted "to make amends to her financially," he said, for his former "wrong." Emma was quite fearful that McVicar might make trouble, but she proceeded with her marriage plans. On August 26, 1905, she signed her name, Jean made his mark, and a justice of the peace united them.

Amidst rumors that Emma would not long be satisfied "in the quiet of her native mountains," the couple rented the sixty-acre, hillside farm Mary had inherited from her deceased husband. Jean welcomed into their home not only Emma's two toddlers, but also Mary and her unmarried children. The arrangement seemed the perfect solution to mother and daughter's struggle to support their families. In that idyllic setting—rolling hills Emma and Jean

had roamed as children—the couple might have found happiness, but McVicar continued to pursue Emma. He appealed to Mary to persuade her daughter to remarry him.

Mary had never been tolerant of Jean's deficiencies. Her new son-in-law, she complained, could not handle any transaction, making it necessary to rely on Attorney Crocker in Jackson. What was more, Jean's farming skills were no better than his arithmetic. He was "making but a bare living." The criticisms created quarrels, which often ended in Mary's packing her bags and moving away for a brief spell.

During those domestic trials, Emma began meeting McVicar. The decision facing her was difficult: she must choose between a reclusive husband who could scarcely keep a roof over their heads and a previously abusive husband—and presumably the father of the twins—who now promised to lavish wealth upon her family. Through long weeks of soul-searching, she confided her internal conflict to no one, not even Mary. Thus, there is no key to unlock her secrets, such as which of the two men this "strange puzzle of a woman" (as one reporter labelled her) loved, or if she were willing to live with a man she no longer loved for the sake of her family's security. Finally she wrote McVicar that she would return to him but did not inform her husband of the decision. The second week of March 1906, only seven months after marrying Jean, Emma packed a few clothes in a satchel. When she kissed her three-year-old sons goodbye at the farm, she could not have realized the finality of the separation.

ON HER arrival at the Rawhide—considered "One of the world's greatest gold mines"—Emma protested that the camp burrowed into the slope of Table Mountain was too remote, and McVicar agreed to move to Jamestown, which at least had a railroad. Emma's new home lay at the base of the Sierra and was known as "the gateway to California's Mother Lode." The town had sprung up in 1848, when the Reverend James Woods discovered a seventy-five-pound nugget on the creek that now flowed by the main street. McVicar would have to travel less than a mile to the Rawhide.

To celebrate their reunion, he drew his wages and took Emma to San Francisco for a holiday. That evening, Emma summoned Dr. John Dillon—her physician since childhood—to a hotel. They had just eaten a supper of shellfish and beer, she explained, and Al "was retching" and "weak as could be." Dillon noticed that Emma "seemed very much concerned and worried" about McVicar, who was indeed in "deplorable condition." After diagnosing ptomaine poisoning, the doctor administered an emetic. He also prescribed twelve and a half grains of morphine for Emma, who suffered constant pain from a displaced uterus and was unable to sleep without the drug. The next day he gave McVicar a half grain of morphine, plus another grain and a half for future use.

On Friday, March 23, the final day of McVicar's life, the couple took a train to Stockton. At Breuners Store they purchased furniture, ordering it delivered to Jamestown. Next they registered at the California House, where the

F E Boswell Photo

Jamestown's National Hotel, founded in 1859, is one of California's oldest continuously operated hotels

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landlady observed that McVicar "had been drinking heavily." That evening he left Emma in the room and continued his drinking spree. He was last seen alive, newspapers informed their readers, at an Italian restaurant late that night, "very drunk and spending money freely."

Readers knew the rest of the story, or at least thought they did. McVicar had returned to room ninety-seven, Emma had given him knockout drops, then poisoned him, and with a blunt object, "such as a sandbag," beaten him on the head, breaking off part of a tooth and inflicting a nosebleed. After emptying his pockets of money, she bought a trunk, packed the bleeding, stupefied man inside, and ordered the baggage sent to the depot. Then she coldbloodedly walked to Breuners and advised the owner to send her furniture, not to Jamestown, but to Jean LeDoux at Martell's Station. Had the trunk reached Jackson, she would have chopped the body into pieces with a butcher's cleaver and dropped them down a deep shaft of the Kennedy mine.

Emma stepped out of the room, and Miller joined her in the hall, saying softly, "Mac is dead." He then ordered her to tell no one, but to go out and buy a trunk and conceal the body. When she refused, he revealed a knife sharpened on both sides and a pistol. He threatened to kill her if she did not obey and then left.

On June 5, 1906, the trial commenced in Stockton's three-story, granite courthouse, built in 1887 and known as one of the most beautiful structures in the state. Atop its dome perched a huge statue of the Goddess of Justice, but Emma's lawyers had expressed fear that adverse pre-trial publicity might cause the goddess's scales to tip against their client. For two hours, men, women, and children—the largest crowd ever assembled for a San Joaquin County trial—jostled for a position near the door, but when it swung open, the bailiff admitted only those who could be seated. The rest had to be content with milling in the adjoining corridors and straining to hear through doors left open for ventilation in the jammed room.

Next to the witness stand was the panel of sober-faced male jurors whose selection had kept defense and prosecution sparring for days. At a table facing the judge sat the defendant, wearing a neatly-tailored outfit which she had undoubtedly sewn herself. She was wedged between the shoulders of her two attorneys: family friend Charles Crocker and Charles Fairall, a "well-known authority on criminal law" whose colorful and sometimes abrasive tactics could create havoc in a court. Emma's fifty-year-old mother sat in the front row.

The prosecution commenced summoning a parade of witnesses, one by one. Throughout the barrage that stretched into days and then weeks, Emma sat "thoughtfully listening to each word" and offering her lawyers advice for cross-examinations. Despite having only a "common school" background, reporters within hearing distance thought she spoke as if she had "the advantage of a college education."

Each afternoon the courtroom reached stifling temperatures. At one session, Mary was "overcome by heat" and startled the audience by "fainting away and falling on the floor." In a rare show of emotion, Emma gave a sharp cry and then sat weeping silently as the "prostrate woman" was carried outside to be restored to her senses. Other sessions, however, were of little interest to the crowd, who perked up only at Fairall's provocative questionings. Once Judge Nutter had to rebuke the fiery-tempered defense attorney for "suggesting that the witness was paid a fee for testifying." Other rapt moments were a reading of Emma's love letters to Jean, followed by Fairall's storming over to District Attorney Norton and accusing him of having stolen the letters.

Of course a profound silence reigned as the infamous trunk was hauled in as an exhibit. A clerk testified that on the morning of the murder he had sold that very chest to Emma. Not once did she lift her eyes to view the offensive exhibit. During a recess, several female witnesses disgusted a Sacramento journalist by jumping from their seats and rushing across the room to see inside the trunk. But the alert sheriff saw them coming and "quickly closed the lid before the curious women could peep at its interior." A display of its contents brought equal interest. Norton dangled the laundry before the jury while Emma gazed at each bloodied piece of McVicar's clothing and then unobtrusively wiped her eyes.

The most damning evidence was Emma's statement to the police. As the chief related the story he had extracted from her, spectators "listened with breathless interest." McVicar, she had related, had spent the night drinking with Joe Miller, a friend from Arizona. In the wee hours of Saturday morning, the two men returned to room ninety-seven, and McVicar attempted to vomit. Emma was greatly concerned, but Miller assured her that "Mac" would be fine. Later, she stepped out of the room, and Miller joined her in the hall, saying softly, "Mac is dead." He then ordered her to tell no one, but to go out and buy a trunk and conceal the body. When she refused, he revealed a knife sharpened on both sides and a pistol. He threatened to kill her if she did not obey and then left. Emma carried out his orders. But "this Joe Miller story," the policeman concluded, was only "a myth" the accused "had trumped up to shield herself."

WHEN THE CHIEF finished, Fairall hopped to his feet and commenced his usual attack. Did the chief expect the court to believe that a woman of 102 pounds had lifted a dead weight of nearly twice her heft into the trunk? Would those 102 pounds be heavy enough to crush down the lid far enough so the straps could be buckled? Fairall's assault so "excited" the chief, a newsman noted, that he became overdefensive and left the stand "badly rattled."

Then a chemist took the witness chair, pointing to a row of liquid-filled jars where sections of McVicar's internal organs floated. Though Emma's purchase of cyanide of potassium had seemed to provide the needed link for her conviction, the chemist delivered a death blow to that theory. "An analysis of the stomach," he testified, revealed "no trace of cyanide of potassium." He *had* discovered a small amount of chloral (a common ingredient in knockout drops), but death "was due to morphine." Neither had the head been pounded with a sandbag. Evidently the tooth had broken when the expressman tumbled the trunk down three flights of stairs at the hotel. Nor did the victim die of suffocation. The chemist had placed his assistant in the trunk for forty minutes, and sufficent light entered through cracks to read a thermometer. A medical doctor then added

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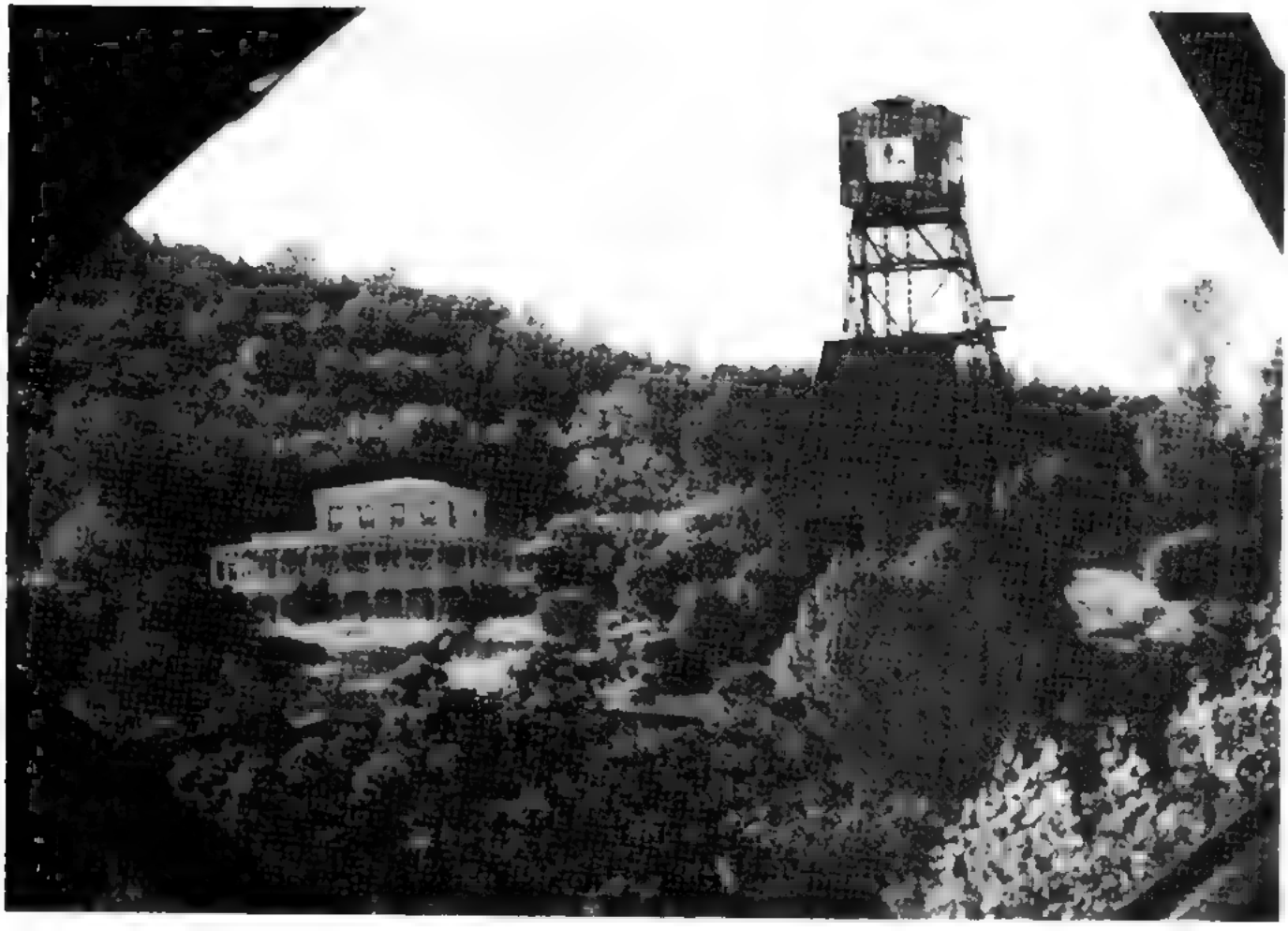

F E Boswell Photo

Jackson's famed Kennedy mine, seen through the spokes of a sixty-eight-foot-high tailing wheel

the information that sufficient pressure from the legs upon the abdomen would cause hemorrhage of nose and mouth, and "blood *would* flow after death."

At last the defense had its turn, but attempting to appear as aggressive as Fairall, Prosecutor Norton protested when the first witness identified a photo of McVicar. Fairall explained to Judge Nutter that he wished to establish that McVicar was in the habit of taking morphine when despondent. McVicar also had induced Emma to "prostitute her body for his gain" and "lived upon money earned by her in that capacity."

"The deceased is not upon trial," Nutter advised.

But Emma was, Fairall insisted, and it was important to show the relationship which existed between deceased and defendant, since McVicar's abuse of Emma had "continued up to the very last date before his death."

"Wholly irrelevant and immaterial," Nutter ruled.

Though Fairall was out of order, he could not resist pointing out that the couple's relationship *was* relevant: Emma "cared so much" for McVicar that she would never have killed him. Nutter instructed the jurors not to consider Fairall's comments in their deliberation.

Nutter's ruling was a decisive loss for the defense, but Emma was still confident that she could exonerate herself by telling her own story. As it was, she told her attorneys, "only one half the real facts went to the jury." Despite her pleas, Fairall refused to place her on the stand. In their closing arguments, defense and prosecution presented opposite interpretations of the love triangle. Norton claimed that Emma's motive had been "love" for her childhood sweetheart and fear that McVicar would reveal all to Jean. The remark brought the peppery Fairall to his feet, sputtering that Emma "could not have loved that pop-eyed wood chopper." It was McVicar she loved, and far too much to take his life. During their exchange, Emma's face remained inscrutable, giving no clue as to which of the two men was correct.

With three weeks of testimony under their belts, the jurors retired. Six hours and twenty-five minutes later, "a loud cheering" erupted from inside their closed room. As the bailiff opened the courtroom, "the crowd surged in," almost forcing each other "off their feet." They found Emma, who had been waiting at the jail two blocks away, already seated at the table, "calmly awaiting her fate." When Nutter had pounded for silence, the court clerk read aloud a slip of paper handed him by the jury foreman: "We the jury . . find the defendant, Mrs. Emma LeDoux, guilty of murder in the first degree." As pandemonium broke loose, a reporter kept his eyes on the convicted woman. She was "by far the most composed person in the room."

Sentencing came two weeks later, with the courtroom "crowded to suffocation." Wearing a "neat suit of black," Emma slowly rose to her feet and stood looking into the judge's eyes as he informed her that on October 19, 1906, at the gallows of San Quentin prison she would be hanged. "Blood rushed to her cheeks," reporters observed, but without so much as "a tremor" she sank to her chair. "She will be the first woman hanged by the state

F. E. Boswell Photo

This statue of Justice presided over the courthouse where Emma LeDoux was tried.

of California," the press reminded its loyal readers. At her cell, Emma sent for a priest, but he was not granted admission to the jail. Neither was Mary, who was forced to return to Jackson without saying good-bye to her condemned daughter.

While her attorneys prepared an appeal, Emma was kept in solitary confinement. "A dark room," she wrote, "infested with cockroaches, sewer rats and all manner of vermin; . . . a mattress on the floor, no pillow, and a soiled blanket," and "dreadful sanitary conditions." For nearly four years she lived under those conditions. In addition, she needed dental work, surgery for her uterus problem, and treatment for failing eyesight. Though Jean still loved her, he had returned to his family, and his sisters threatened "to throw him out" if he tried to help Emma. Unable to support the twins, Mary sent them to Oregon to live with her unmarried daughter.

By the time the California supreme court reversed her conviction in May 1909 (partially because soon after being sworn one juror had stated, "I believe the woman is guilty, and she ought to have her neck broke. . . . I will hang the ——."), Emma was, in her own words, "sick at heart" and so weak she "could scarcely walk alone." Immediately she wrote Fairall, but the sheriff ordered the letter detained at the jail. Day after day she lay on the mattress, waiting for a response that would never come. Eventually she concluded that both attorneys and family had abandoned her.

The jail matron described events which followed next: "Sheriff Sibley . . . called me over to his office and asked me to talk to Mrs. LeDoux and see if I could prevail on her to plead guilty, saying it would save the County many thousands of dollars. . . . I was a week or ten days pleading with her." When Emma steadfastly maintained her innocence, the sheriff sent four officers of the court to her cell. "Each visited in turn," Emma related, "and talked to me about pleading guilty, advising it as my only means of receiving justice . . . that Judge Nutter had promised to show clemency if I would save the court the expense of a new trial." If she stood trial again, Norton advised, she "would surely receive the death penalty."

At last Emma informed the matron that she "did not care what was done." Shortly after, Fairall arrived at her cell, waving a guilty plea bearing her signature. "I have no recollection of signing any such paper," she told him. "Neither do I believe I did." Agitated that she had acted without his advice, Fairall departed and never again visited her. On February 2, 1910, she entered San Quentin with a life sentence.

Behind the high walls of the small "hen house" (prison slang for the women's department), Emma donned the royal-blue uniform and adjusted to a world which consisted of nothing more than a cell, a workroom where she and thirty-one sister inmates sewed uniforms for male prisoners, and a concrete pit used as an exercise yard. On special Sundays, the warden allowed the women to tramp the hills beyond the prison and collect wildflowers to

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brighten their cells. Though the "trunk murderess" was the most notorious of female prisoners, the matron found her the most reliable and selected her as trusty, delivering to her all keys to the female facility. Then in a 1916 riot, Emma was attacked along with the matron, and though knocked to the floor and repeatedly kicked, managed to escape and bring help, thus saving the matron's life.

THROUGHOUT her years of imprisonment, she received two work paroles, and since Jean had finally divorced her, married her fifth husband. Her first parole was revoked on charges of taking a drink of "intoxicating liquor." Missing pages in her case file make it impossible to verify rumors concerning her second violation, but at age sixty-nine she died in San Quentin, insisting to the end that she had not killed McVicar.

Preserved in California archives are Emma's letters, sprinkled with grammatical errors and misspellings. In historic Jackson, a visitor can still marvel at the gigantic tailing wheels and towering headframe of the Kennedy Mine. In Stockton, people can visit the modern, high-rise courthouse and gaze up at the huge statue of Justice which once presided over Emma LeDoux's trial, or at Haggin's Museum they can examine the blood-stained trunk.

Though posterity seems to have entertained no doubts about Emma's guilt, her attorney did. "Mrs. LeDoux's story," Crocker wrote, "has never been told by her to any one but myself." Crocker believed that after a night of heavy drinking, McVicar had returned to the hotel, slipped off his shoes, and flopped down on the bed next to the sleeping woman. That fateful Saturday morning Emma had awakened to find that her "bed-fellow" was a corpse. She did not know how he had died; neither did she ever accuse anyone of killing him. Because she was married to another man, Crocker thought, it was only "natural" that she would try "to shield herself." Even if she "put the corpse in the trunk, . . . that does not make her guilty of murder." The weakness of the prosecution's case was its failure to prove that McVicar was actually murdered. The trunk mystery was still unresolved, Crocker felt, and whether McVicar himself overdosed on morphine, or whether Emma gave him the fatal dose was "known to no one but her." And that secret, Emma took with her to the grave.

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The Red River Crossing

By SUSIE KEMP FATHREE

One of the early ferries on the Red River was at the town of Kemp. Still standing on the banks of the Red River in southern Oklahoma, Kemp is a clean little town with several homes, maybe a service station and store, and nothing else commercial.

In 1840, the United States government was moving the Chickasaw tribe from Mississippi to Indian Territory. The family of Levi Kemp was one of those moved. Of mixed blood, the Kemps were not one of the poorer families. They had built their plantation to productive proportions and owned at least a dozen slaves. Levi, with his wife, Polly, and his son, Joel, age fifteen, was able to sell their property in Mississippi, and travel the river route to Indian Territory. The government did not pay their passage—only those who could afford to pay the fee were given that option. The Kemps, along with a dozen other Chickasaw families, were transported via river steamer along with their children, household goods, livestock, and, in the case of the Kemps, their slaves.

The Indian families, on barges, navigated the Mississippi River to the Red River, but travel was not easy. The barge had been overloaded and as they struggled to stay afloat, they dumped belongings that they could spare into the river to lighten the load. When they reached the Red River, they found debris and low water levels in some places. In some locations the debris formed a logjam 130 miles long. When the Chickasaws reached this spot they tried to use the tributaries that formed on the sides of the river. This would sometimes take days as they had to wait for water high enough to float barges for their journey to resume. Finally, they reached lower banks flat enough that they could touch land and unload their families and belongings.

Joel Kemp and his parents, Levi and Polly, had thrown some of their belongings into the Mississippi River, but managed to salvage enough to set up a makeshift house on the river. It was not until 1857 that Levi managed to build a six-room log house for his family.

The Chickasaw families who traveled with them from Mississippi settled nearby, and they were able to help each other build houses, outhouses, and barns. They had only the most primitive of materials with which to work, but the river yielded a vast number of logs. The Chickasaws had always lived in some type of house, and when British traders came into their territory and married Chickasaw women, later generations were of mixed blood and some of their customs were necessarily patterned after the British.

On the other side of the Red River lay Texas, and the nearest trading place for the settlers was the town of Bonham.

Author's Photo

Colbert's ferry across the Red River. Kemp's ferry probably would have been similar to this one.

They could travel the short distance of about sixteen miles by horseback; the Chickasaw ponies were good for that distance, even though they could only carry light loads.

When Joel was eighteen, his father allowed him, along with Saul, his black friend whom Levi owned, to ride to Bonham for supplies. The small amounts they could carry on horseback hardly paid a man to ride so far, but Levi thought it would be a chore the youngsters could handle. Joel liked to ride and he liked Saul's company. Neither of the boys were concerned that they were different, or that Saul was a slave to Joel's father; they were good friends and had been all their lives.

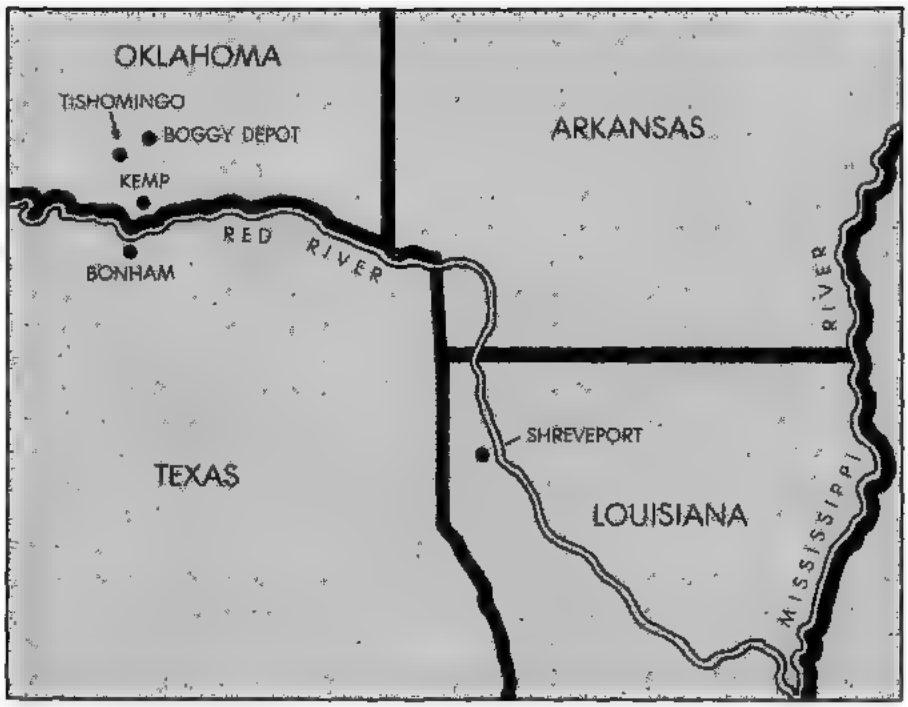
The boys had to ride up river to find a shallow crossing that everyone who forded the river used. It added miles to the journey. However, there was an advantage. The Colbert family lived near the crossing, and the trail passed their house; Maria Colbert was the daughter of the Chickasaw chief, and the trip was much more interesting when Joel could catch a glimpse of her.

On one particular trip Maria was in the yard, and Joel was able to speak with her. In fact, he arranged to meet her at the next church social. That led to their courtship and, ultimately, their marriage.

Even though the trip up the river to the shallow ford didn't bother Joel and Saul, it was a hardship for many others, including Levi Kemp, who could see a need for better transportation. Also, since crops, pigs, chickens, and cows had always been his livelihood, he knew the river land would take time to prepare for cultivation. Already the Indian Territory side of the Red River was filling with Indians and whites who were dependent on Texas communities for their supplies. Levi knew that rowing primitive boats across the Red River, walking to the general stores, then getting the supplies back across the river was a great task.

Levi hit on the idea of building a raft large enough to float people, horses, and wagons across the river. He fastened logs together to build the raft, securing it so that it would hold a great deal of weight yet stay afloat. In so doing Levi started the first ferry on the Red River and found a way to make a living for his family while he cleared his land for farming. The ferry became a welcome sight to the settlers who began to use it in numbers.

Levi took almost anything for pay for using his ferry. He was a generous man, but poling the raft across the river was hard work and took many hours because of the number of trips he made almost every day. Levi operated the ferry along with Joel before and after the Civil War, doubling his toll to one dollar after that conflict. After a number of years, Levi Kemp turned the operation over to Joel.



The path of the Red River

Big wagons crossed the Red River on the Kemp ferry. Some were taking meal to be ground since there were no grist mills in the county; some of the people used a hand steel mill or beat grain on a mortar. During the Civil War, women made shuck bread to send to soldiers. Rebel soldiers occasionally passed the Kemp house, fifteen and twenty at a time, and stopped for food. The women would cook a whole hog in big black wash pots to feed the men, who would eat everything in sight and move on.

After the war, sugar was brought in from Shreveport, Louisiana, in big wagon loads; the wagons crossed the Red River on the Kemp Ferry and then stopped to sell sugar to the settlers who could afford it. Levi Kemp would buy two barrels every fall, one full of white sugar and the other of brown. It cost ten cents a pound before the war, and twenty-five cents after.

Once a year, usually in October, Joel Kemp would go to the "Giles Thompson Salt Works" at Boggy Depot, Indian Territory, and spend two months getting the winter's supply of salt. He had a fifty-gallon iron pot which he would load on the wagon to boil water in. He would take one of his sons, a cook, and one or two neighboring Indian men. Fifty gallons of water would boil out eight or ten pounds of salt.

The Kemps' slaves were loyal, and the Kemps treated them as part of the family. Three months before the end of the Civil War, Maria Kemp heard of two black boys, ages ten and thirteen, who had been put up as bail by the wife of a man who had committed a murder. Maria rode to Bonham and paid $1,000 in gold for the boys. With the end of the war the children had no place to go, so they stayed with the Kemps until they were grown. When they left on their own, they took the Kemp name, as had been customary for slaves.

WHEN STAGECOACHES began to run across Indian Territory into Texas, they made a trip from Fort Washita, Indian Territory, to Bonham. When they reached the Red River, they boarded the Kemp Ferry to cross.

Joel continued operating the Kemp Ferry and also became national treasurer for the Chickasaw tribe. His duties included working with the Chickasaw legislature in Good Springs, Indian Territory. When Joel Carr was twenty years old, his father, because of ill health, turned the ferry operation over to him. Joel Carr operated the ferry for twenty years. But trails became roads, bridges spanned the river, and communities grew in Indian Territory. Joel stopped operating the Kemp Ferry and moved his family to Good Springs, which later became Tishomingo, Oklahoma.

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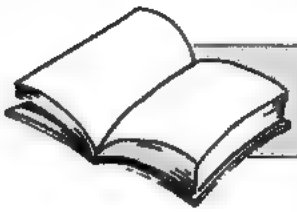

Books

Sheep Rancher

Andy Little, Idaho Sheep King, by Louise Shadduck. (The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 312 Main Street, Caldwell, Idaho 83605. $23.95 cloth bound.)

By the time twenty-four-year-old Andy Little arrived in Caldwell, Idaho, from Scotland in 1894, he had two dollars in his pocket. He had made the long ocean voyage, traveled by train from New York with his two border collies, and had a job waiting for him on the Aikman spread near Emmett. But he had a problem. Emmett was twenty miles away, and the stage fare was three dollars. He walked.

By the end of the year Andy's employer offered him the opportunity to buy half a band of sheep with his earnings and a note for the other half. Andy made his decision. He was now in business with 2,000 head of sheep, and he would stay in this "big country" and start buying land.

As his bands of sheep and land holdings grew, Andy returned to Scotland and brought a wife, Adis, home with him. They worked well as a team and raised five children. Author Louise Shadduck, a native Idahoan, traces the family tree in detail from Scotland to the great-great-grandchildren today. All but one of Andy's eight brothers followed him from the "land of hills and heather" to make their homes in "the land of hills and sagebrush." They, too, eventually built farms and businesses in Idaho.

But Andy was the sheep king. He created a sheep empire, running as many as twenty-seven ranches efficiently with organizational skill that sheep growers still study. He developed the largest single sheep operation in Idaho and quite possibly in the nation. He had more than 200,000 sheep at one time, and they ranged over 7,500 square miles.

Andy's bands produced a million pounds of wool, averaging ten pounds per sheep, in 1929. Another time his crews sheared sixty bands in thirty days, never stopping until 60,000 had been sheared.

In addition to his influence on the sheep industry itself, Andy Little was responsible for the famous sheep dogs in Idaho. Beginning with the first border collies he brought with him from Scotland and others he imported, virtually every sheep outfit in the state had a dog with Little breeding.

Although it is about 150 years since the first sheep were brought into Idaho, the thousands of trails made by millions of sheep can still be seen from airplanes. As Shadduck writes, "that is as it should be, for much of Idaho's history is intermingled with the woolies, the collies and shepherds, the herders, the clippers, the dippers and the shippers." The book deals with all these topics.

One chapter, "Basques: The Good Shepherds," records much about the sheep herders who came from the western foothills of the Pyrenees Mountains in Spain. They became an integral part of Idaho's culture and history, and were instrumental in building Andy Little's business through the years.

Little personified the sheep industry, and it is only natural that much of the book deals with sheep. One of the most interesting chapters, however, is an interview with an old-timer, Allen Wilson. It is through such recollections by friends and relatives that the character and personality of Andy Little emerge.

The meticulous genealogical tracing of many early Idaho families, either related to or acquainted with the Littles, may not always hold the interest of the average reader. Still, this book is a genuine contribution to the history of Idaho.—*Willah Weddon, Stockbridge, Michigan.*

Indian Relics

Objects of Myth and Memory, by Diana Fane, Ira Jacknis, and Lise M. Breen. (University of Washington Press, P.O. Box 50096, Seattle, Washington 98145-5096. $60.00 cloth bound.)

This beautiful book, furnished with 354 illustrations (104 of them in color), was inspired by an exhibit sampling and celebrating the 9,000 American Indian relics collected by curator Stewart Culin, who made the Brooklyn Museum into a rival of Manhattan's Heye collection before World War I. Later the museum shifted its chief interest from ethnology to art, per se.

The book is a mix of interpretive essays and 250 examples of the rich archive's baskets, bowls, clubs, masks, amulets, totem poles, and other artifacts, all handsomely photographed and nicely annotated. The volume is broken into four parts representing Culins' special interests—the Southwest, California, the Pacific Northwest Coast, and the Osages of Oklahoma.

This long-overdue first publication devoted to Brooklyn's great Amerindian collection is, like the collection, a monument to a neglected, virtually forgotten scholar and collector of American Indian artifacts, which themselves are objects of art. For serious students and collectors of American Indian art, this volume is a "must."—*Richard Dillon, Mill Valley, California.*

Doc's Last Work

Final Harvest, and Other Convictions and Opinions, by C.L. Sonnichsen. (Texas Western Press, University of Texas at El Paso, El Paso, Texas 79968-0633. $12.00 paper bound.)

"Late Harvest" was the original title for this book, scheduled for release in October 1991 in honor of C.L. "Doc" Sonnichsen's ninetieth birthday. Then Doc died on June 29 and the book became *Final Harvest.* It seems only fitting.

Final Harvest is a collection of personal essays, opinions, and convictions that Sonnichsen either brought with him to El Paso in 1930, or developed while there. And Doc's opinions, poignant, candid, and laced with humor and frequent bursts of startling insight, are as appropriate as they ever were.

There aren't but ninety pages in this book, and those include a foreword by renowned New Mexico writer and friend, Max Evans, and an introduction by El Pasoan Nancy Hamilton. Six essays are offered.

Sonnichsen discusses "Harvard on the Border," a reference to bumper stickers about the University of Texas at El Paso that were prevalent locally during the 1960s and 1970s. El Pasoans snickered when they should have been thinking, building, and changing. Doc believed a more fitting description for UTEP would have been "Texas International," if not in name, at least in fact. The school should have capitalized on its unique location and talents to

become truly international.

As commencement speaker at UTEP in 1972, Sonnichsen spoke on "The Little Blue Flame." He talked about people who sell the school, the city, and themselves, short. This brilliant, thought-provoking essay can be almost summed up in one sentence: "The man or woman who is excited about something gets other people excited too."

Those who believe the definition of a modern scholar is a "university professor who can qualify for a grant," will enjoy "The Folklore of Academe." Doc did not believe Gay Liberation had a place in the classroom, and he suggested that the one unifying theme of scholars—militants, liberals, conservatives, and feminists—was the absolute and unrelieved absence of a sense of humor.

On another topic, Sonnichsen writes of how the "winning of the West" has been corrupted into the "the raping of the West." If one believes modern revisionist historians, our forebears were not honest and decent people but greedy opportunists "who debauched the aborigines." He outlines that point of view as it appeared in the rise of the porno-western novels. Now even the sexy westerns have gone into decline, Sonnichsen says, and westerns as serious literature may not return until many old-fashioned restraints and values have been recovered.

If you like to read and think at the same time, then grab a copy of *Final Harvest*. It's worth the effort.—*Leon Metz, El Paso, Texas.*

Surviving on a Texas Ranch

I'll Gather My Geese, by Hallie Crawford Stillwell. (Texas A&M University Press, Drawer C., College Station, Texas 77843-4354. $18.50 cloth bound.)

Hallie Stillwell describes herself as "a survivor, not a quitter" and her recollections of pioneer ranching in Texas more than substantiate her claim. Hallie's experiences were awesome, and she writes about them in a straight-forward, nonsense manner.

Born in Waco, Texas, on October 20, 1897, Hallie Crawford had two brothers and two sisters. Of the five children, it was Hallie who assisted the doctor when her father had hernia surgery on their

7

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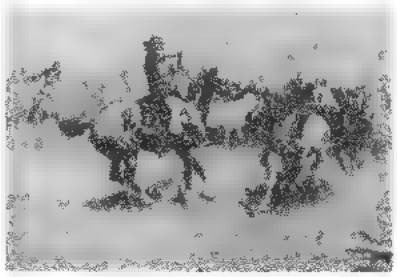

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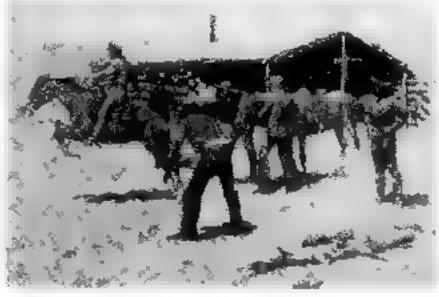

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kitchen table. She was gritty and a tomboy; these characteristics served her well in the years ahead.

By the time Hallie graduated from high school in 1916, she had also obtained her teaching certificate. Her first teaching job was in Presidio, a town just across the Rio Grande from Ojinaga, Mexico, which Pancho Villa had recently captured. To be on the safe side, Hallie took her father's six-shooter with her.

After a year in Presidio, Hallie signed up to teach in Marathon. There she met and married Roy Stillwell, a cowman who was twenty years her senior. The Stillwell ranch was and is located forty-six miles from the nearest town and twenty-two miles north of the Rio Grande.

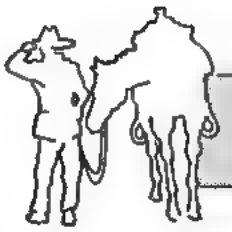
"When Roy first brought me to this ranch, it consisted of three hundred sections of open range and small traps (pastures for holding livestock) here and there," Hallie recalled. It was the last frontier of Texas and became known as the Big Bend country. "I knew that I would come to love the land although it was hot, sandy, and even lonely at times."

Lonely at *times*? She was the only woman on the ranch with Roy and two cowboys, none of whom talked much. She spent most of her time riding and working cattle with the men. They did the cooking.

When she did have a day to stay in the ranch house, Hallie decided to clean up the place and scoured the old black coffee pot. It had never been cleaned before and the men were outraged. They predicted dourly that it would be six months before the pot would make decent coffee again.

Hallie tells not only of the good times, but of the hard times as well. The Stillwells lost loved ones to Spanish influenza during World War I. They barely survived the dust storms of the Depression and finally had to accept the federal government's offer to send men to shoot their cattle and pay twelve dollars a head for adult cows and six dollars a head for calves.

They managed to keep the ranch running during World War II, when their eldest son was in the service and Roy's health was failing. After Roy's death in 1948, Hallie continued to run the ranch and she concludes her book when all the Stillwell cattle are threatened by prolonged drought. It is a gripping story and well worth reading.—*Willah Weddon, Stockbridge, Michigan.*



Trails Grown Dim

Reed

I am researching my grandfather who was born in San Antonio, Texas, July 5, 1876. He was always secretive about his past in Texas, and he left home when he was about thirteen because of a "shooting incident." The first thirty-two years of his life remain a mystery, and little is known about him until he arrived in Idaho around 1906, using the name William P. Reed. Riding with him was his younger brother, George Moore. I believe their mother was Margaret Hill, and their father was George Reed.

He was a demonstration shooter for the Union Cartridge Company and was nicknamed "Dead Shot Reed" for his ability to shoot accurately with both hands. He stated that he was also a Texas Ranger and made trips to Mexico, Arizona, and other states. I would appreciate any leads in ascertaining his true identity and deeds.—**Claudia Klingback, 522 West Central Road, Emmett, Idaho 83617.**

Richer

I would like to contact anyone who knew my father, Henri Theodore Richer. He married my mother, Jessie Lou Miller, in Memphis, Tennessee, and left for France in 1914 to fight in the French Army. He fought with the United States Army in 1918. I am trying to get his service records for both armies.

He returned to Mississippi in 1920 and left for Oregon and Washington in 1921. His relatives lived there, and the last I heard he died in that part of the country.—**George F. Richer, US Soldiers' and Airmen's Home, P.O. Box 278, Washington, D.C. 20317.**

Varner

I am seeking information on my great-great-great-grandfather, Joseph Mack Varner, who was born about 1807 in Alabama or Tennessee. He lived in Calhoun County and Yalobusha County, Mississippi until 1870 when he moved to Burleson County, Texas. Both Joseph and his wife, Judith Dawson Varner, are buried in Providence cemetery in Burleson County. I would appreciate any information.—**James Varner, P.O. Box 765, Princeton, Texas 75407-0765.**

Oberlender

My maternal grandfather, Alex Oberlender, left his family in a small town in northeast Nebraska about 1900. He owned a race horse named Rex Americanus. He supposedly spent the rest of his life gambling, racing horses, and otherwise wandering, perhaps largely in Missouri. He probably lived for a time in Kansas City or St. Louis.

Alex died at the Missouri state hospital in 1926. Records there show that he was in the "real estate business." I would like to have a picture of him for my family records, and also any other information on his life between 1900 and 1926.—**T.R. Jacobson, P.O. Box 1140, Hot Springs, South Dakota 57747.**

Morris-Clark

My great-grandmother, Sarah (Morris) Clark was born to George and Mary Angeline (Peelar) Morris, October 21, 1864, in Lansing, Kansas. She married Ezra Clark on December 23, 1882. They went to Washington Territory in 1887 or 1888 and to Oregon in 1908. She had cousins named Hortence and Charley. Does anyone know anything about them?

George Morris, my great-great-grandfather, was born March 9, 1836, in Green County, Illinois. He and his brothers, William M. (born about 1832, perhaps in North Carolina or Tennessee), and Jacob (born September 26, 1844, in Calhoun County, Illinois) were all in Company K of the Nineteenth Kansas Militia in 1864. They were the sons of Jacob Morris and Elizabeth Yandell. I think the father, Jacob, died about 1868 in Kansas.

Elizabeth (Yandell) Morris went to Washington Territory in 1882. Her son, Jacob, and his family also went there in 1882. Both George and Jacob died in Rockford, Washington, and were buried in the Fairview Cemetery. Did their brother, William, stay in Kansas? I would appreciate any information about this family.—**Elinor Dale Scheer, 3090 N.E. Lincoln, Hillsboro, Oregon 97124.**

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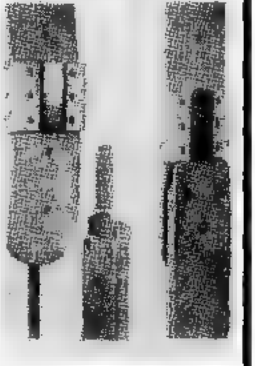

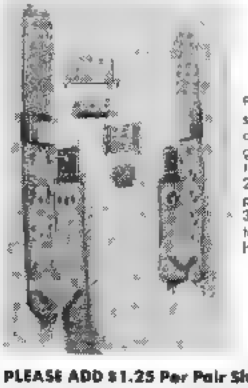

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Nate Champion vs. Regulator Army

—April 9, 1892; KC Ranch, Wyoming—

By BILL O'NEAL

Nate Champion was born in 1857 near Round Rock, Texas, to a large, well-respected family. Champion became a cowboy, and after accompanying a herd up the Goodnight-Loving Trail in 1881, he and his twin brother, Dudley, stayed in Wyoming. The Champion brothers became top hands on several ranches and began to side with Johnson County homesteaders and small ranchers in a growing feud with wealthy cattle barons.

Like many cowboys, Nate occasionally appropriated stray cattle for his own use, and the big ranchers began to call him "King of the Rustlers." The Wyoming Stock Growers Association assigned Frank Canton (who had been an outlaw going by Joe Horner in the 1870s), Tom Smith, Joe Elliott, and Fred Coates to apprehend Champion.

Nate and Ross Gilbertson were living in a line shack owned by W.H. Hall on the Powder River. Just before dawn on November 1, 1891, the four gunmen crept up to the little log building. But one of the range detectives dropped a revolver loaded in all six chambers and it discharged. The gunmen then kicked in the door, which was adjacent to the cabin's only bunk. One of the gunfighters shouted, "Give up. We have got you this time." Champion sat up beside Gilbertson, asked "What's the matter, boys?" and then snatched his six-gun from a holster on the bedpost.

CHAMPION and one of the intruders fired simultaneously: Nate was powder-burned in the face by one wild shot, and a second slug plowed into the bedding between the two partners. Champion nicked one of his assailants in the arm, another was hit in the side, and the four gunmen scampered to safety. In their haste they left behind four overcoats, horses, a trail of blood, and a Winchester that Smith had given Canton. Champion ran out the door in pursuit and traded shots with Elliott, who chased him back inside. Elliott later was arrested and charged with attempted murder, but Gilbertson, the only witness, disappeared and the charges were dropped.

The following spring Smith was dispatched to Texas to recruit gunfighters for an all-out range war in Johnson County. He was authorized to offer five dollars per day and expenses, a three-thousand-dollar accident policy, and a bonus of fifty dollars for any enemy shot or hanged. Smith enlisted twenty-six men in and around Paris and headed for Wyoming, where other hardcases and numerous ranchers swelled the force to more than fifty men. A $100,000 "extermination fund" had been raised to pay for the Johnson County invasion, and the "Regulators" were given a list of seventy troublemakers to kill.

Early in April Major Frank Wolcott, with Smith and Canton as his chief lieutenants, led the Regulators toward Buffalo, the center of opposition to the cattle barons. Along the way they learned that Nate Champion and Nick Ray, both of whom were on the kill list, had leased the nearby KC Ranch. The Regulators promptly detoured and surrounded the ranch buildings just before dawn on April 9, 1892.

On the evening of April 8 two out-of-work cowboys, Bill Walker and Ben Jones, spent the night with the ranch partners, drinking, yarning, and singing to the accompaniment of Walker's fiddle. At sunrise Jones emerged from the cabin to get a bucket of water. Canton quietly arrested him, and when Walker came outside thirty minutes later he, too, was captured.

A few minutes later Ray walked out the door and the Regulators opened fire. Champion came to the doorway and exchanged shots with Regulators in the stable and a nearby creek bed before retreating back inside. As the mortally wounded Ray crawled toward the house,

Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Library

Frank Canton, who exchanged shots with Nate Champion, later became adjutant general of the Oklahoma National Guard. He is shown here (middle row, fourth from left) in the Philippines in 1900.

Champion suddenly reappeared, fired several more rounds, then dragged his partner inside under heavy fire.

Between tending Ray and shooting at his attackers, Champion wrote a journal describing the siege. Ray died about nine o'clock and Champion commented, "Boys, I feel pretty lonesome just now. I wish there was someone here with me so we could watch all sides at once."

About 3:00 p.m. Jack Flagg, who was also on the death list, rode by the KC Ranch accompanied by his stepson at the reins of a supply wagon. When he was fired upon, Flagg cut one of the wagon animals loose for his stepson, and they galloped away with several Regulators in fruitless pursuit.

THE REGULATORS realized that Flagg would spread the alarm, and they determined to finish Champion, who had witnessed the chase and written in his journal, "I hope they did not catch them fellows." Champion continued to exchange fire with the Regulators. "Well, they have just got through shelling the house like hail. I heard them splitting wood. I guess they are going to fire the house to-night. I think I will make a break when night comes, if alive."

But the sounds Champion heard were those of the Regulators fashioning Flagg's captured vehicle into a fire wagon. They loaded it with pitch pine wood and hay, backed it against the house, and fired it with a torch. "The house is all fired," wrote Champion. "Goodbye, boys, if I never see you again."

Revolvers blazing, Champion made a dash for a ravine fifty yards away. But several Regulators were positioned there and shot him down. Champion fell on his back and the Regulators continued to pump lead into him. Twenty-eight wounds were later counted in his body.

Punctured by a bullet and stained with blood, the journal was found in Champion's pocket and given to Sam Clover, a Chicago *Herald* correspondent who had helped fire on the cabin. A note proclaiming, "Cattle thieves, beware," was pinned to Champion's shirt, and the Regulators proceeded on toward Buffalo. But Flagg had spread the word, and the Regulators were besieged by angry citizens at the TA Ranch, fourteen miles from Buffalo. The Regulators soon surrendered, and following a long incarceration at a military post, the cattle barons arranged a legal victory.

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By GLADYS M. CAMPBELL

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The citizens of American Falls and vicinity were disappointed that their small frontier town was not included on the train's itinerary. After all, they were in the center of a large ranching area where thousands of cattle roamed the hills. The cowboys who worked the cattle led rugged lives, but even so, they at times wanted to enjoy some of the finer things. Now civilization was rolling by their town without even stopping.

American Falls was no town to be left out. The gaily decorated Pullman cars came roaring down the track intending to go through at full speed when the engineer saw an obstruction on the track. A small crowd of men were on the track waving red flags, coats, and other signs to stop. As the train slowed down and stopped at the station, cowboys rode up beside it, discharged their guns, and demanded some music.

After a short consultation, the members of the band emerged from the cars and took their places on the railroad station. While the band members were adjusting their music stands, the excited cowpunchers shouted and shot at bottles they threw in the air over the musicians' heads.

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Holdup

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The gaily decorated Pullman cars came roaring down the track intending to go through at full speed when the engineer saw an obstruction on the track. A small crowd of men were on the track waving red flags, coats, and other signs to stop. As the train slowed down and stopped at the station, cowboys rode up beside it, discharged their guns, and demanded music.

The boys were invited into the Pullman for a "smile." As the train pulled out, they fired a parting salute and gave a lusty cheer.

The story of the train holdup at American Falls was given publicity by newspapers across the country and later played up with lurid pictures in *The Police Gazette*, a national magazine.

The railroad company threatened to punish the cowboys, but never did. All the Westerners wanted was a chance to hear some good music.

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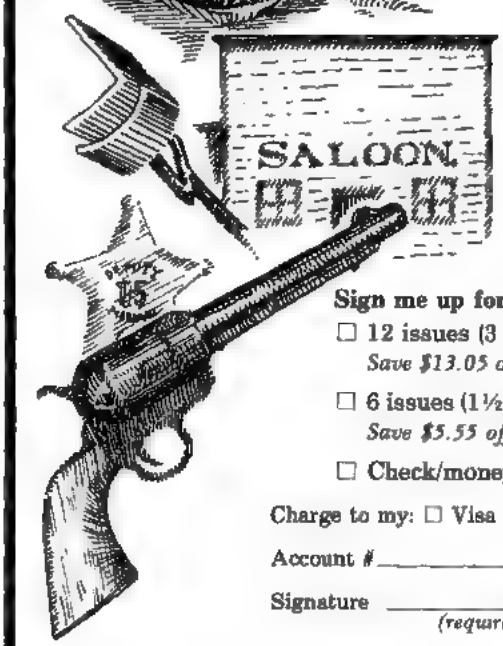

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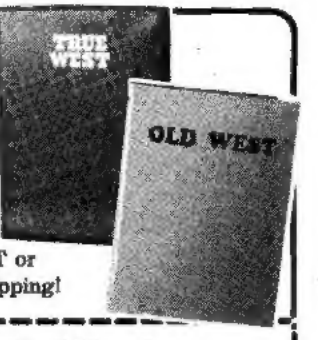

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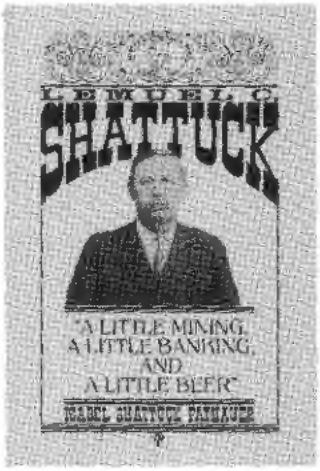

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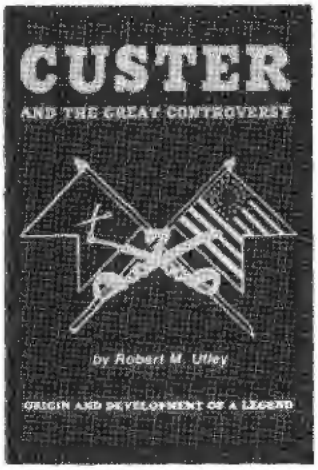

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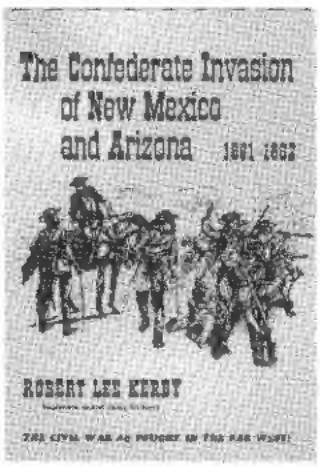

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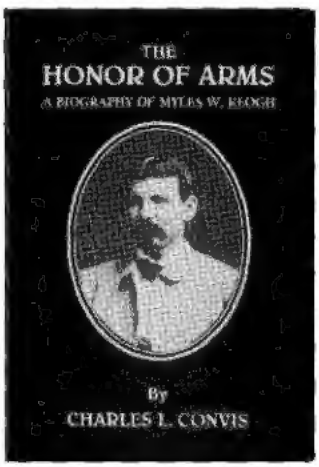

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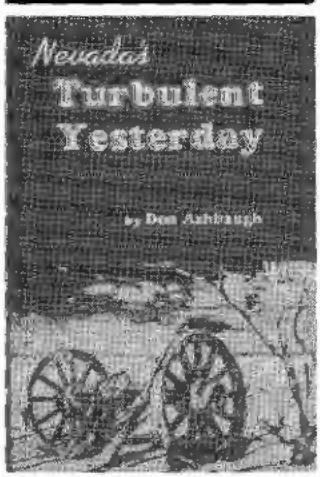

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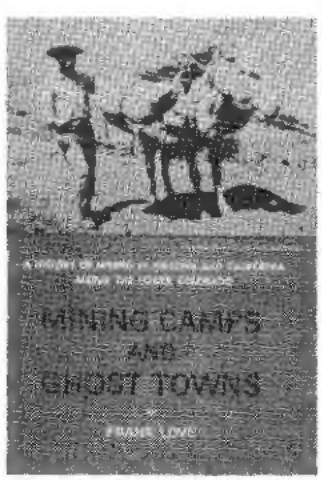

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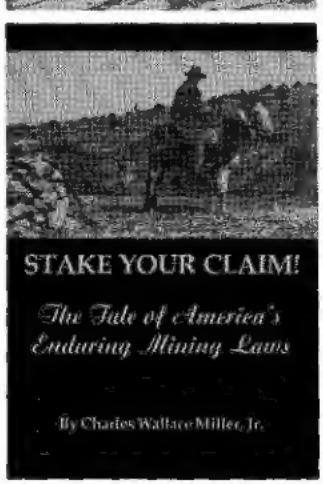

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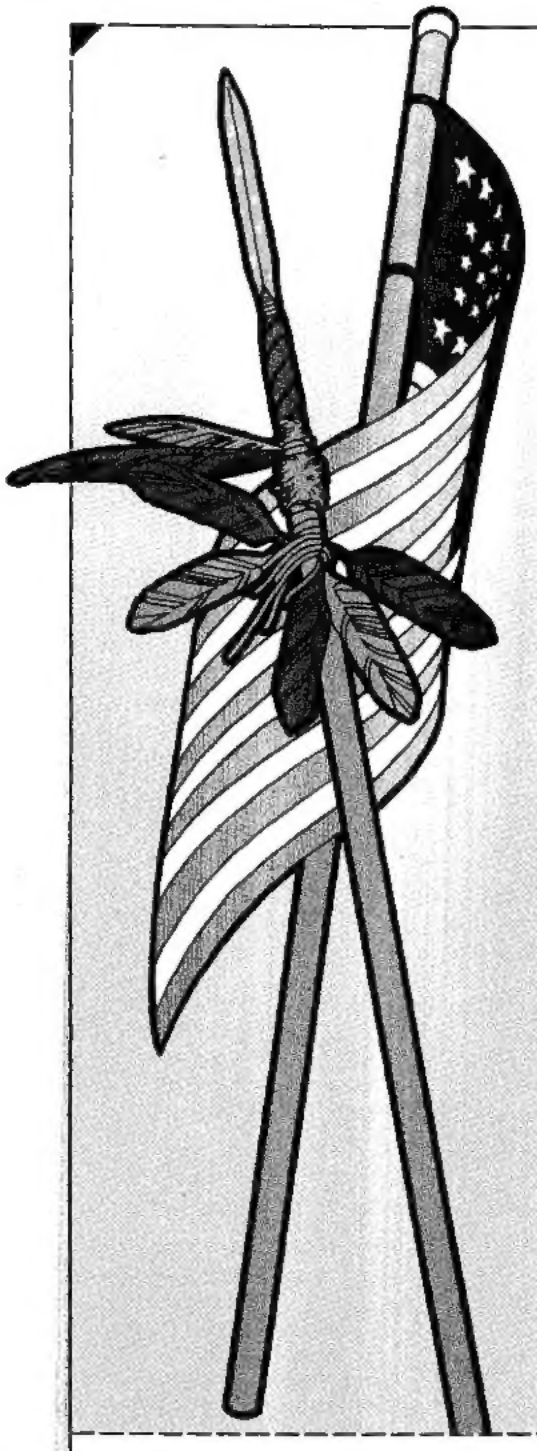

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